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PARTISAN REVIEW/4

Steven Marcus
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Jan Kott
The Sexual Triangle

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Distributed in the U.S.A. by DeBoer, Nutley, N.J. 07710, Capitol News, Boston 02120 and L-S Distribution, San Francisco 94109.

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PR4 1977-VOLUME XLIV NUMBER 4

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NOTES

DONALD BARTHELME's latest book is *Amateurs*, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. . . . "Screeno" by **DELMORE SCHWARTZ** will be included in the New Directions edition of *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities and Other Stories* coming out in April, 1978. Our thanks to the collection of the Beineke Library, Yale University, for the use of the holograph of "Screeno" now in their possession. . . . The author of *Banquet Years*, **ROGER SHATTUCK** won a National Book Award for *Marcel Proust*. He teaches at the University of Virginia. . . . A recent graduate of the MFA writing program at the University of California, Irvine, **KILLARNEY CLARY** lives in Santa Ana Heights, California. . . . *Taxi Driver*, published by Bantam, is **RICHARD ELMAN**'s latest book. . . . **MICHAEL BROWNSTEIN**'s most recent book is *Strange Days Ahead*, published by Z Press. . . . **DAVID LEHMAN** teaches English at Hamilton College, where he directs the Poetry Series and the Nobodaddy Press. . . . Editor of *OINK*!, a poetry magazine, **PAUL HOOVER** teaches at Columbia College in Chicago. . . . **HARRY FAINLIGHT** has published *Sussicran*, a pamphlet from Turret Books. . . . **EILEEN MYLES**'s poems have appeared in several poetry magazines, including *dodgems*, which she edits. . . . **MAXINE CHERNOFF** is the author of *A Vegetable Emergency* and co-editor of *OINK*!. . . . A native Southern Californian, **MARILYN JOHNSON** is a recent graduate of the MFA writing program at the University of California, Irvine. . . . Harper & Row has published three of **HARRY MATHEWS**'s novels together in: *The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium and Other Novels*. . . . **JOHN HAFFENDEN** is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Sheffield. He is writing an authorized biography of John Berryman for Farrar, Straus & Giroux. . . . *Shakespeare Not Our Contemporary* is the title of the book **JAN KOTT** is currently working on. He is the author of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* and *The Eating of the Gods.* Mr. Kott teaches at S.U.N.Y. at Stonybrook. . . . **ATANAS SLAVOV** was a leading figure in the struggle for liberalization of Bulgarian literary life, which ended for him in 1963. With a grant from the Ford Foundation, he is now writing a book about Bulgarian dissent literature. . . . **KONSTANTIN PAVLOV** has published two books of verse in Georgian and Slovakian. They are *Satires*, which appeared in 1960, and *Verse* in 1965. He is a member of the Union of Film Producers in Bulgaria. . . . Formerly Provost and Vice President of Rutgers University, **RICHARD SCHLATTER** is now Professor of History there. . . . **GEORGE STADE** is completing a novel, *Confessions of a Lady Killer*, to be published by Norton. . . . **WASSILY LEONTIEF** teaches at New York University. . . . A member of the English Department at Harvard University, **DANIEL AARON** is the author of *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War*. . . . **ALICIA OSTRIKER** is Professor of English at Rutgers University. Her annotated edition of the complete poems of William Blake will soon be appearing under the Penguin imprint. . . . **JOSEPH BRODSKY** arrived here from Russia in 1972. He is Poet in Residence at the University of Michigan. . . . A teacher of Russian at Queens College, **BARRY RUBIN**'s latest translation is "Homage to Yalta," a poem by Joseph Brodsky which will be published in *Kontinent* in January. . . . An associate professor of English at Barnard College, **MAIRE KURRIK** is the author of *Georg Trakl* and the forthcoming *Literature and Negation*. . . . **PAUL ROBINSON** teaches European Intellectual History at Stanford. His latest book is *The Modernization of Sex* and he is currently working on a book on opera and the history of ideas.

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STORIES

Donald Barthelme

GREAT DAYS

—When I was a little girl I made mud pies, dangled strings down crayfish holes hoping the idiot crayfish would catch hold and allow themselves to be hauled into the light of day. Snarled and cried, ate ice cream and sang "How High the Moon." Popped the wings off crickets and floated stray Scrabble pieces in ditchwater. All perfect and ordinary and perfect.

—Featherings of ease and bliss.

—I was preparing myself. Getting ready for the great day.

—Icy day with salt on all the sidewalks.

—Sketching attitudes and forming pretty speeches.

—Pitching pennies at a line scraped in the dust.

—Doing and re-doing my lustrous abundant hair.

—Man down. Center and One Eight.

—Tied flares to my extremities and wound candy canes into my lustrous, abundant hair. Getting ready for the great day.

—For I do not deny that I am a little out of temper.

—Glitches in the system as yet unapprehended.

—Oh that clown band. Oh its sweet strains.

—Most excellent and dear friend. Who the silly season's named for.

—My demands were not met. One, two, three, four.

—I admire your dash and address. But regret your fear and prudence.

—Always worth making the effort, always.

—Yes that's something we do. Our damnedest. They can't take that away from us.

—The Secretary of State cares. And the Secretary of Commerce.

—Yes they're clued in. We are not unprotected. Soldiers and policemen.

—Man down. Corner of Mercer and One Six.

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—Paying lots of attention. A clear vision of what can and can't be done.

—Progress extending far into the future. Dams and aqueducts. The amazing strength of the powerful.

—Organizing our deepest wishes as a mother foresightedly visits a store that will be closed tomorrow.

—Friendship's the best thing.

—One of the best things. One of the very best.

—I performed in a hall. Alone under the burning lights.

—The hall jampacked with admiring faces. Except for a few.

—Julia was there. Rotten Julia.

—But I mean you really like her don't you?

—Well I mean who doesn't like violet eyes?

—Got to make the effort, scratch where it itches, plans, schemes, directives, guidelines.

—Well I mean who doesn't like frisky knees?

—Yes she's lost her glow. Gone utterly.

—The strains of the city working upon an essentially nonurban sensibility.

—But I love the city and will not hear it traduced.

—Well, me too. But after all. But still.

—Think Julia's getting it on with Bally.

—Yeah I heard about that he's got a big mouth.

—But handsome hip bones got to give him that.

—I remember, I can feel them still, pressing into me as they once did on hot afternoons and cool nights and feverish first-thing-in-the-mornings.

—Yes, Bally is a regal memory for everyone.

—My best ghost. The one I think about, in bitter times and good.

—Trying to get my colors together. Trying to play one off against another. Trying for cancellation.

—I respect your various phases. Your sweet, even discourse.

—I spent some time away and found everyone there affable, gentle, and good.

—Nonculminating kind of ultimately affectless activity.

—Which you mime so gracefully in auditoria large and small.

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—And yet with my really wizard! good humor and cheerful thoughtless mien, I have caused a lot of trouble.

—I suppose that's true. Strictly speaking.

—Bounding into the woods on all fours barking like a mother biting at whatever moves in front of me—

—Do you also save string?

—On my free evenings and paid holidays. Making the most of the time I have here on this earth. Knotting, sewing, weaving, welding.

—Naming babies, Lou, Lew, Louis.

—And his toes, wonderful toes, that man has got toes.

—Decorated with rings and rubber bands.

—Has a partiality for white. White gowns, shifts, aprons, flowers, sauces.

—He was a salty dog all right. Salty dog.

—I was out shooting with him once, pheasant, he got one, with his fancy shotgun. The bird bursting like an exploding pillow.

—Have to stand there and watch them, their keen eyes scanning the whatever. And then say "Good shot!"

—Oh I could have done better, better, I was lax.

—Or worse, don't fret about it, could have put your cute little butt in worse places, in thrall to dismaler personalities.

—I was making an effort. What I do best.

—You are excellent at it. Really first-rate.

—Never fail to knock myself out. Put pictures on the walls and pads under the rugs.

—I really admire you. I really do. To the teeth.

—Bust your ass, it's the only way.

—As we learn from studying the careers of all the great figures of the past. Heraclitus and Launcelot du Lac.

—Polish the doorknobs with Brasso and bring in the sea bass in its nest of seaweed.

—And not only that. And not only that.

—Tickling them when they want to be tickled. Abstaining, when they do not.

—Large and admirable men. Not neglecting the small and ignoble. Dealing evenhandedly with every situation on a case-by-case basis.

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—Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

—Knew a guy wore his stomach on his sleeve. I dealt with the problem using astrology in its medical aspects. His stomach this, his stomach that, God Almighty but it was tiresome, tiresome in the extreme. I dealt with it by using astrology in its medical aspects.

—To each his own. Handmade bread and individual attention.

—You've got to have something besides yourself. A cat, too often.

—I could have done better but I was dumb. When you're young you're sometimes dumb.

—Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. I remember.

—Well let's have a drink.

—Well I don't mind if I do.

—I have Goldwasser, Bombay gin and Old Jeb.

—Well I wouldn't mind a Scotch myself.

—I have that too.

—Growing older and with age, less beautiful.

—Yeah I've noticed that. Losing your glow.

—Just gonna sit in the wrinkling house and wrinkle. Get older and worse.

—Once you lose your glow you never get it back.

—Sometimes by virtue of the sun roaring through the leaves of the trees on a summer's day.

—Wrinkling you so that you look like a roast turkey.

—As is the case with the Oni of Ife. Saw him on television.

—Wrinkled and wrinkled and wrinkled.

—Let me show you this picture.

—Yes that's very lovely. What is it?

—It's *Vulcan and Maia.*

—Yes. He's got his hooks into her. She's struggling to get away.

—Vigorously? Vigorously. Yes.

—Who's the artist?

—Spranger.

—Never heard of him.

—Well.

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—Yes, you may hang it. Anywhere you like. On that wall or that wall or that wall.

—Thank you.

—Probably I can get ahead by working hard, paying attention to detail.

—I thought that. Once I thought that.

—Reading a lot of books and having good ideas.

—Well that's not bad. I mean it's a means.

—Do something wonderful. I don't know what.

—Like a bass player plucking the great thick strings of his instrument with powerful plucks.

—Blood vessels bursting in my face just under the skin all the while.

—Hurt by malicious criticisms all very well-grounded.

—For Leatherheart, I turn my back. My lustrous, abundant back.

—That cracks them up does it?

—At least they know I'm in town.

—Ease myself into bed of an evening brain jumping with hostile fluids.

—It's black beans in a pot.

—It's confetti in the swimming pool.

—It's U-joints in the vichyssoise.

—It's staggers under the moon.

—He told me terrible things in the evening of that day as we sat side by side waiting for the rain to wash the watercolors from his watercolor paper. Waiting for the rain to wash the paper clean, quite clean.

—Took me by the hand and led me through all the rooms. Many rooms.

—I know all about it.

—The kitchen is especially splendid.

—Quite so.

—A dozen Filipinos with trays.

—Close to that figure.

—Trays with edibles. Wearables. Readables. Collectibles.

—Ah, you're a fool. A damned fool.

—I?

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—Goodbye, Madame. Dip if you will your hand in the holy water font as you leave, and attend as well to the poorbox just to the right of the door.

—Figs and kiss-me-nots. I would meet you upon this honestly.

—I went far beyond the time normally allotted for a speaker. Far.

—In Mexico City. Wearing the black jacket with the silver conchos. And trousers of fire pink.

—Visited a health club there, my rear looked like two pocketbooks, they worked on it.

—You were making an effort.

—Run in the mornings too, take green tea at noon, study household management, finance, repair of devices.

—Born with a silver hoe in your mouth.

—Yes. Got to get going, got to make some progress.

—Followed by development of head-banging in the child.

—I went far beyond the time normally allotted to, or for, a speaker. It is fair to say they were enthralled. And transfixed. Inappropriate laughter at some points but I didn't mind that.

—Did the Eminence arrive?

—In a cab. In his robes of scarlet.

—He does a tough Eminence.

—Yes very tough. I was allowed to kiss the ring. He sat there, in the audience, just like another member of the audience. Just like anybody. Transfixed and enthralled.

—Whirling and jigging in the red light and throwing veils on the floor and throwing gloves on the floor—

—One of my finest. They roared for ten minutes.

—I am so proud of you. Again and again. Proud of you.

—Oh well, yes. I agree. Quite right. Absolutely.

—What? Are you sure? Are you quite sure? Let me show you this picture.

—Yes that's quite grand. What is it?

—It's *Tancred Succored by Ermina.*

—Yes she's sopping up the blood there, got a big rag, seems a sweet girl, God he's out of it isn't he, dead or dying horse at upper left. . . Who's the artist?

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—Ricchi.

—Never heard of him.

—Well.

—I'll take it. You may stack it with the others, against that wall or that wall or that wall—

—Thank you. Where shall I send the bill?

—Send it anywhere you like. Anywhere your little heart desires.

—Well I hate to be put in this position. Bending and subservient.

—Heavens! I'd not noticed. Let me raise you up.

—Maybe in a few days. A few days or a few years.

—Lave you with bee jelly and bone oil.

—And if I have ever forgiven you your astonishing successes—

—Mine.

—And if I have ever been able to stomach your serial triumphs—

—The sky. A rectangle of gray in the foreground and behind that, a rectangle of puce. And behind that, a square of silver-gilt.

—Got to get it together, get the big bucks.

—Yes I'm thinking hard, thinking hard.

—Frolic and detour.

—What's that mean?

—I don't know just a bit of legal language I picked up somewhere.

—Now that I take a long look at you—

—In the evening by the fireside—

—I find you utterly delightful. Abide with me. We'll have little cakes with smarm, yellow smarm on them—

—Yes I just feel so fresh and free here. One doesn't feel that way every day, or every week.

—Last night at two the barking dog in the apartment above stopped barking. Its owners had returned. I went into the kitchen and barked through the roof for an hour. I believe I was understood.

—Man down. Corner of Water and Eight Nine.

—Another wallow?

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—I've wallowed for today thank you. Control is the thing.

—Control used to be the thing. Now, abandon.

—I'll never achieve abandon.

—Work hard and concentrate. Try Clown, Baby, Hellhag, Witch, the Laughing Cavalier. The Lord helps those—

—Purple bursts in my face as if purple staples had been stapled there every which way—

—Hurt by malicious criticisms all very well-grounded—

—Oh that clown band. Oh its sweet strains.

—The sky. A rectangle of glister. Behind which, a serene brown. A yellow bar, vertical, in the upper right.

—I love you, Gottlieb, quite exceptionally.

—By gum I think you mean it. I think you do.

—It's *Portia Wounding Her Thigh.*

—It's *Wolfram Looking at His Wife Whom He Has Imprisoned with the Corpse of Her Lover.*

—If you need a friend I'm yours till the end.

—Your gracious and infinitely accommodating presence.

—Julia's is the best. Best I've ever seen. The finest.

—The muscle of jealousy is not in me. Nowhere.

—Oh it is so fine. Incomparable.

—Some think one thing, some another.

—The very damn best believe me.

—Well I don't know, I haven't seen it.

—Well, would you like to see it?

—Well, I don't know, I don't know her very well do you?

—Well, I know her well enough to ask her.

—Well, why don't you ask her if it's not an inconvenience or this isn't the wrong time or something.

—Well, probably this is the wrong time come to think of it because she isn't here and some time when she is here would probably be a better time.

—Well, I would like to see it right now because just talking about it has got me in the mood to see it. If you know what I mean.

—She told me that she didn't like to be called just for that purpose, people she didn't know and maybe wouldn't like if she did know, I'm just warning you.

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—Oh.

—You see.

—I see.

—I could have done better. But I don't know how. Could have done better, cleaned better or cooked better or I don't know. Better.

—You smile. And the angels sing. La la la la la la la la la la la.

—Blew it. Blew it. Had a clown at the wedding he officiated standing there in his voluptuous white costume his drum and trumpet at his feet. He said, "Do you, Harry. . ." and all that. The guests applauded, the clown band played, it was a brilliant occasion.

—Our many moons of patience and accommodation. Tricks and stunts unknown to common cunts.

—The guests applauded. Above us, a great tent with red and yellow stripes.

—The unexploded pillow and the simple, blunt sheet.

—I was fecund, savagely so.

—Painting dead women by the hundreds in passionate imitation of Delacroix.

—Sailing after lunch and after sailing, gin. Do not go into the red barn, he said. I went into the red barn. Julia. Swinging on a rope from hayloft to tack room. Gazed at by horses with their large, accepting eyes. They somehow looked as if they knew.

—You packed hastily reaching the station just before midnight counting the pennies in your purse.

—Yes. Regaining the city, plunged once more into activities.

—Acquired busts of certain notables, marble, silver, bronze. The Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

—Wailed a bit now and then into the ears of friends and caverns of the telephone.

—But I rallied. Rallied.

—Made an effort. Made the effort.

—To make soft what is hard. To make hard the soft. To conceal what is black with use, under new paint. Check the

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tomatoes with their red times, in the manual. To enspirit the spiritless. To get me a jug and go out behind the barn sharing with whoever is out behind the barn, peasant or noble.

—Sometimes I have luck. In plazas or taverns.

—Right as rain. I mean okie-dokie.

—Unless the participant affirmatively elects otherwise.

—What does that mean?

—Damfino. Just a bit of legal language I picked up somewhere.

—You are the sunshine of my life.

—Toys toys I want more toys.

—Yes, I should think you would.

—That wallow in certainty called the love affair.

—The fading gray velvet of the sofa. He clowned with my panties in his teeth. Walked around that way for half an hour.

—What's this gunk here in this bucket?

—Bread in milk, have some.

—I think I could eat a little something.

—A mistletoe salad we whipped up together.

—Stick to it, keep after it. Only way to go is all the way.

—Want to buy a garter belt? Have one, thanks. Cut your losses, try another town, split for the tall timber.

—Well it's a clean afternoon, heavy on the azaleas.

—Yes they pride themselves on their azaleas. Have competitions, cups.

—I dashed a hope and dimmed an ardor. Promises shimmering like shrimp in light just under the surface of the water.

—Peered into his dental arcade noting the health of his pink tissue.

—Backed into a small table which overturned with a scattering of ashtrays and back copies of important journals.

—What ought I to do? What do you advise me? Should I try to see him? What will happen? Can you tell me?

—Yes it's caring and being kind. We have corn dodgers too and blood sausage.

—Lasciviously offered him a something pure and white.

—But he hastily with an embarrassed schottische of the hands covered you up again.

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—Much like that. Every day. I don't mind doing the work if I get the results.

—We had a dog because we thought it would keep us together. A plain dog.

—Did it?

—Naw it was just another of those dumb ideas we had we thought would keep us together.

—Bone ignorance.

—Saw him once more, he was at a meeting I was at, had developed an annoying habit of coughing into his coat collar whenever he—

—Coughed.

—Yes he'd lift his coat collar and cough into it odd mannerism very annoying.

—Then the candles going out one by one—

—The last candle hidden behind the altar—

—The tabernacle door ajar—

—The clapping-shut of the book.

—I got ready for the great day. The great day came, several times in fact.

—Each time with memories of the last time.

—No. These do not in fact intrude. Maybe as a slight shimmer of the over-and-done-with. Each great day is itself, with its own war machines, rattles, and green lords. There is the hesitation that the particular day won't be what it is meant to be. Mostly it is. That's peculiar.

—Well, it's a clean afternoon, heavy on the azaleas.

—He told me terrible things in the evening of that day as we sat side by side waiting for the rain to wash his watercolor paper clean. Waiting for the rain to wash the watercolors from his watercolor paper.

—About me?

—Oh, everything.

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Delmore Schwartz

SCREENO

For three hours, Cornelius Schmidt attempted to raise himself from the will-lessness and despondency which had overcome him. He tried to read the *New York Times*, which today contained the long obituary of a great man, the only kind of story that could awaken any interest in him. He played records on his portable victrola, first a string quartet by Haydn, and then, tiring of this with the third record, playing certain singing records of a celebrated movie actress. But to no avail: the music was lifeless as his own spirit. He then resorted, as often before in such a mood, to the icebox, making for himself a fat sandwich out of materials which would have otherwise not appealed to him. Having eaten the sandwich, he seated himself by the window and watched the quiet October evening rain soundlessly falling through the bright arc of the street light downstairs, four floors below, and pocking and wrinkling the glittering puddles. Automobiles passed with the frying sound which tires make on wet streets. Cornelius took down a volume of poetry of which he was very fond and tried to read it. A poem of his own slipped from the book. He read the first few verses and shuddered, thoroughly disheartened. Drenched by such a tasteless, colorless mood, there was only one refuge, one sanctuary: the movies.

He left a note for his mother on the kitchen table, donned his trenchcoat, and departed. Anticipation of the movie to be seen already began to rise in his breast. People in the huddled posture which rain enforces passed him as he walked to the business avenue where stores shone wetly and brightly in the rainy night. Two boys were standing outside a candy store and trying to get chewing gum from the box beside the newsstand. Cornelius, in his rising spirits, was tempted to stop and afford

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them the benefit of his childhood talent for such efforts, his ability to make the machine give freely by a certain trick. But he knew that the boys would merely be shy, or afraid of him, and perhaps even antagonistic. At the age of twenty-five, he said to himself, I am neither here nor there, and can no longer expect to return with ease to the world of the young, that cruel zoo inhabited by a special kind of animal.

He came to the arcade of the movie house, reading the titles printed in electric bulbs framed by other lights which raced backward and forward along the arcade.

> JOHN BOLES AND EVELYN LAYE IN ONE HEAVENLY NIGHT ALSO SPENCER TRACY IN FREEDOM SCREENO TONIGHT $475 CASH

The presence of the new lottery annoyed him, for it meant an interruption in the flow of movies while the stage was lit and everyone looked about dazedly. At such times, Cornelius slouched far down in his seat, ashamed for some reason to be at the theater alone, as if it were a confession of a lack of friends and engaging activities. But Spencer Tracy was an actor who had often pleased him by an absolute unself-consciousness, and Cornelius wished also to permit himself to be moved by the operetta music. Decided, he walked toward the box office, as a stream of people came out of the darkness of the theatre, looking like sleepwalkers.

At the door the uniformed ticket taker gave him a card on which was printed a kind of checkerboard, having in each box a number. It was obviously the old game of Lotto, the object being to get five numbers which were successive either horizontally or vertically or in a diagonal. In the center, amid numbered boxes, was a box entitled GRATIS; the management gave this box to the audience.

Cornelius completed his examination of this card while walking on the eerie soundless plush carpet of the stupendous lobby, from whose lofty top great chandeliers hung. In a moment, he was in the midst of the ghostly evening of the theater; two thousand entranced persons stared toward the white and black screen, ignorant of all else. A harried usher led him to

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an aisle in the middle of the theater and hastily departed. Once free of the usher, Cornelius walked further down, blind in the soft darkness after the recent blaze of chandeliers, and after some trouble found himself the kind of seat he wanted, one in the middle of the aisle, where he would not be disturbed by those who wished to depart.

Located in his seat, and comfortable at last, Cornelius directed his gaze toward the screen. The newsreel was on, and cavalrymen were leaping high barriers, flying upward from the saddle at the apex of the jump and settling back again, all of this performed with no little grace. The unseen voice, the commentator who always made Cornelius remember the Oracle at Delphi, was saying: "Uncle Sam does not intend to be unprepared." The scene shifted suddenly, to the accompaniment of sad and heavy music. Flood pictures were shown; a family departed from its almost submerged frame house in a rowboat, the young son of the family clutching his dog in his arms. The face of the dog and of the boy were shown in a close-up. The bleak and baffled look of the dog charmed the audience. Everything moved slowly in the slowly moving water. The commentator stated his sentiments in a histrionic baritone: "Nature shows its might on the Ohio. Thousands are left homeless by the cruel and raging waters." And then with a montage of archetypal newsreel scenes (West Point; a batter swinging; Roosevelt at the microphone; an actress descending from a train) and a martial music which came to a ringing close, the newsreel was ended. The theater lightened and a well-dressed young man came upon the stage before the screen, carrying a microphone with him. The uniformed ushers followed him. In the corner stood a round red poster to which golden discs were attached. When you turned the disc over, the amount of money you had won was revealed by the dollar sign upon the disc.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen," said the young man, speaking into the microphone with a knowing and efficient tone. "The management is again glad to offer prizes for the winners in Screeno. Again we are offering $425 for anyone who gets Screeno with the first seven numbers called. If no one is so fortunate, then we will add $25 to the amount and next week the sum will be $450. Besides this, $50 in prizes will be distributed

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tonight to the first ten people who get Screeno. Now as soon as you have five consecutive numbers, either horizontally or vertically or in a diagonal, please call out loudly and clearly and come down to the stage. Then you will place your disc on the board and you will win some part of fifty dollars. Remember now! five numbers in a row! horizontal, vertical, diagonal. Good luck to all of you! And remember that everyone can't win."

True enough, said Cornelius to himself.

The theater fell into semi-darkness, not the movie darkness, but one in which discreet lights shone on both sides of the theater and both sides of the stage. A white and pink clockface flashed on the screen. It was, in fact, like a roulette wheel, and had numbers running from 1 to 100. In the center was a pointer, which suddenly began to whirl furiously about the clockface, and then slowed down, and then stopped.

"Ninety-nine!" said the businesslike yet airy young man in an authoritative voice. An usher wrote down the number upon a blackboard to the right of the screen. The pointer spun again, at a tremendous pace, so that it was almost a moving blur for a moment, and then clarified into its arrowlike straightness. The actual wheel was, of course, in the projection room.

"Fifty-four!" said the young master of ceremonies, simulating a dramatic tone.

"Screeno!" cried a voice from the balcony in a mocking voice, while everyone laughed, for obviously no one could have Screeno as yet.

"I am sorry, ladies and gentlemen," said the young man in an affable voice, "but we will have to ask you not to be humorous about this. After all, money is involved, and there has been much confusion in the past because various people insisted upon trying to be funny."

"All right, Senator," cried the same balcony voice, and the audience laughed again. Meanwhile Cornelius had become very interested. He had both of the first two numbers and had marked them by pushing his finger through the soft cardboard of each box. It would be curious indeed, he said to himself, if I won. Probably no one here could make better use of the $425. But I have never been lucky and I am certainly not a prize-winner.

The pointer was revolving again. "Thirty-nine!" an-

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nounced the young man. The audience was not yet warmed up, because too few numbers had been called for anyone to be on the verge of winning. Cornelius, however, also had this third number and was pleased no little by the course of events.

"Forty-nine!" announced the young man.

"Raspberries!" cried the same voice from the balcony.

"Please!" said the young man in a tone of unctious and good-natured irony, "I must ask you to restrain yourself, my dear friend in the balcony. Otherwise we will be forced to suppose that you are intoxicated, and since there are more suitable places than this for those in that state, we will have to ask you to leave. Your money will be refunded."

"I won't go. I've been kicked out of better places than this," said the balcony voice. The young master of ceremonies signalled to one of the ushers, indicating the necessity of action. Cornelius had paid little attention to the disturbance, for the number forty-nine was on his card also. He needed only one more number in order to win, and was enormously excited. He felt that something was about to go wrong; good fortune was always too precarious, too contingent, too arbitrary an event to be, in truth, good fortune. *Non forat ullum illaesa felicitas,* (unbroken prosperity is unable to bear any evil, if I have translated Seneca correctly). The disturbance from the balcony impressed him immediately as a possible source of reversal and he turned a resentful face toward the balcony, faced forward again, and waited for the pointer to turn again. It did.

"Eight!" cried the young master of ceremonies. A hasty glance convinced Cornelius that he did not have the number. Two more chances to win the big prize, and buy fifty volumes in the Loeb Classical Library. The pointer turned weakly this time.

"Fourteen!" cried the young man into the microphone which made his voice even more official than otherwise. Cornelius did not have the number. He assured himself that the game was a fraud, that the management was obviously not going to permit anyone to win so much money and that the whole business would obviously be controlled in the projection room or by arranging the numbers on the cards. There was only one

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more chance, a drop in the ocean. He slouched back in his seat, chiding himself for his great excitement.

Meanwhile the pointer was turning quickly, and then weakly.

"Twenty-five!" the master of ceremonies called out.

Twenty-five! Twenty-five! said Cornelius to himself, and then, finding the number on his card as the fifth consecutive horizontal number, he rose in his seat and shouted:

"Screeno!" in a too loud voice which broke, and began to issue from his aisle, tripping over the feet of the people seated near him, some of whom were solicitous of his walk, and eager to provide good advice as he passed. The attractiveness of the winner shone in him.

Twenty-five! Twenty-five! said Cornelius to himself. My age! My gold mine! He felt the eyes of the whole immense audience upon him as he walked to the stage and the self-consciousness which had always tortured him made him walk with too-careful steps.

An usher took his card, and checked it with the numbers on the blackboard. The young man came over to oversee the usher. It seemed , to look at the young man, as if something was wrong, someone had miscalculated. The checking was done several times. Very bureaucratic, said Cornelius to himself. Recovering, as the check-up proved that Cornelius had indeed won, he shook Cornelius's hand and the whole theater lighted up.

"Lucky fellow," cried the balcony voice, amusing the audience again, by the envious tone in his voice.

"Congratulations," the young man said, "the sum of $425 is yours." He led Cornelius before the microphone. Now before I pay you, will you tell us your name and address."

"Cornelius Schmidt," whispered Cornelius (the whisper, but not the words resounded in the microphone). "845 West 163rd Street."

The young man repeated this information into the microphone as if it were a matter of great importance.

"Cornelius Vanderbilt," shouted the balcony wit, "Park Avenue."

"And what do you do?" the young man asked both Cornel-

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ius and the microphone, as if no one could do anything which would not come under his authority.

"Oh," said Cornelius, "I do many things," into the microphone.

The audience laughed, and Cornelius, pleased, grinned in spite of himself. But he was uneasy. He did not wish to tell the truth, that he was a writer, for he was an unknown writer, and besides the profession always appeared to him as seeming peculiar and anomalous to others. On the other hand, he did not want to say he was unemployed, his usual subterfuge, because that also seemed a shameful admission. And then he was ashamed of himself, angered at himself for not wishing to tell the truth, for being ashamed of a noble calling, so that he forced himself to the other extreme, and specified his kind of writing and told the functionary that he was a poet. He knew this would be equivalent to sissy or bohemian for some of the audience.

"Mr. Schmidt is a poet" announced the young man unctuously, patronizingly, and then, desiring to be humorous himself, he spoke cutely into the microphone:

He's a poet,
His feet show it,
They're Longfellow's!

The audience roared as the young man drew out the last word with a triumphant tone, and Cornelius blushed and wished he were elsewhere, and became extremely angered at the young man, who had previously merely annoyed him. As a matter of fact, Cornelius's feet were by no means small, and, becoming still more self-conscious, he tried to withdraw his shoes somehow from public view.

"I am sure we would like to hear one of the poems of so fortunate a young man," said the official young man. He was trying to delay matters until one of the ushers could bring enough money from the box office to pay Cornelius. "Please," he said, "recite some verses for us."

"O no!" said Cornelius firmly, backing away. The young man gestured to the intrigued audience which then began to applaud in unison to express its desire to hear Cornelius recite his verses.

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Angered again, and in his anger going again to the other extreme, Cornelius decided to recite for them. All of his happiness in winning had disappeared, and a mood of stubborn resentment had come upon him.

"Very well," he said harshly into the microphone. "I will recite some appropriate verses for you." Changing his tone to one of serious and dramatic import, and permitting a certain implication of tiredness, illness and despair to creep into his voice, he began:

> Think now
> History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
> And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
> Guides us by vanities. Think now
> She gives when our attention is distracted
> And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
> That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late
> What's not believed in, or if still believed,
> In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon
> Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
> Till the refusal propagates a fear.

He ended appalled at himself, as if he had made a shocking confession. But he saw that his effort was a failure for his tone had been false, too serious. The audience had been silenced and puzzled by the verses, but the young man, curiously enough, had been impressed.

"Are those your own verses?" he asked.

"No. I wish they were," said Cornelius. The audience wakened at this and laughed.

"Those verses were written by the best of modern poets," said Cornelius, "a man named T.S. Eliot, whom all of you ought to read." Even in saying this, Cornelius knew that this advertisement was a foolish thing.

The usher arrived with the money just as the persistent balcony voice called out, "Let's go on with the show," and the audience began to clap again, wishing to have its chance at the other prizes.

But then, as the money was delivered to the young assistant manager, and he began officiously to count it out, shuffle it, and arrange it, before paying Cornelius, a hoarse and disused voice cried from the balcony:

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"Screeno! Screeno!"

A silence fell upon all, and all turned backward to look for the author of the impassioned outcry.

"Screeno!" came the voice again, this time nearer, as the new winner approached the stairs from the balcony to the orchestra. The young assistant manager and the ushers looked at each other in dismay. Something had obviously gone wrong, for usually no one won the jackpot; two winners was inconceivable and would lead to bankruptcy. Someone was going to lose his job because of this.

In a moment, the new winner was on the stage. He was a small and slight old man, carrying a violin case and wearing glasses. In his unpressed black suit, he looked very much like a waiter in a cheap restaurant. He was completely out of breath, completely beside himself. An usher took his card from his quavering hand and began to check it with the numbers on the blackboard. The young assistant manager came over to superintend the checking, obviously hoping for some mistake. Meanwhile, Cornelius stood by suddenly ignored, having nothing to do. He had not yet been given his money, but was blissful with ideas of its expenditure.

"If the manager loses all this money," said one usher to another, "it will be the biggest collapse since the Fall of the Hapsburgs."

"My name is Casper Weingarten," said the old man, unasked, intruding himself upon the huddle of the assistant manager and the ushers. He was very nervous, very excited. "I am a musician," he said, but no one paid any attention to him, except Cornelius.

And then the young assistant manager came over to the old man and holding the card up showed him that he had not won, that he had mistaken a seven for a one because the print had been on the left-hand side. "Perhaps you'll win one of the other prizes," he said, courteously, "since you already have four numbers in a row."

"You mean I don't win?" said the old man. "Why not?" he said, having understood nothing of the explanation. His mistake was explained again, while he stared at his card.

"No!" he said loudly. "This is a one, not a seven. I win.

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Give me my money." His voice was weak and now that he raised it, it was curiously pathetic, and like the voice of an angry child. And to make matters worse, he began to cough.

"My dear man," said the assistant manager, resuming his official tone, "I am sorry but you are mistaken. You have not won. You have mistaken a seven for a one because the print was faint. After this, all of the cards will be clearly printed, so that such mistakes cannot occur."

Cornelius came over to look into the matter for himself. He took the card in his hand and looked at the number in question. The old man looked at him, and then turned to the assistant manager, saying:

"Give me my money! I have won!"

"You are being very unreasonable," said the assistant manager, begining to look harassed. The audience now began to clap to indicate its desire for proceeding with the rest of the game. The assistant manager explained what had happened to the audience with great care and tact.

"Give me my money!" shouted the old man, as the young man was speaking to the audience.

"Please return to your seat," he said to the old man, "so that the game can go on."

Meanwhile Cornelius had looked carefully at the number in question and decided that the assistant manager had no ground for deciding that the one was a seven. There was a blur beside the upright bar of one which might conceivably have been meant to be the horizontal bar which completed the seven, but the faintness of the blur was not sufficient to justify the assistant manager.

"Look here," said Cornelius tactfully to the assistant manager, "it seems to me that you can only assume that this is a one. The blur is too faint to make it a seven."

"I know it is a seven," said the assistant manager angrily, and when he said that, Cornelius recognized immediately that he was so sure because the cards had been prepared in advance to obviate the possibility of two winners of the jackpot, or even one. Seeing this, Cornelius began to feel sick and angry, as he always did when confronted with fraud or cheating.

"All my life I've been cheated," said the old man, wringing

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his hands. "Give me my money." An usher took his arm, as if to lead him from the stage, but the assistant manager deterred him, unwilling as yet to resort to force.

"Look here," said Cornelius firmly, "either you pay him or I am going to speak to the audience about this." In reply, the assistant manager began to pay Cornelius, counting the money with clipped tones as he placed it in Cornelius's hand. The old man grabbed the assistant manager's arm when he finished, saying:

"Where is my money? Don't cheat me, I've had hard luck all my life."

"My good man," said the assistant manager, "Your hard luck is not my fault, nor this theater's responsibility. Please do not cause a disturbance. Now if both of you will leave the stage, we can go on with the other prizes and with the show."

In answer, the old man sat down upon the stage, looking grotesque there, with his head turned up. "I will sit here until I am paid," he said tearfully.

The scene was becoming unbearable for Cornelius. The old man seemed to have decided that this money was as important as his life. As far as Cornelius was concerned, he had been cheated. This was too much for Cornelius.

"I am going to tell the audience about this," said Cornelius.

"No, you're not," said the assistant manager, but Cornelius reached the microphone before the assistant manager could get there.

"Listen!" said the assistant manager, in a wearied breathless panicky voice, "I'm going to lose my job for this. Have a heart."

This new object of sympathy made matters even more complex for Cornelius. But then he looked toward the old man seated on the floor. He had begun sobbing, and he had taken off his glasses, wet by his tears, and was drying them with a rumpled handkerchief.

This sight decided Cornelius. He grasped the microphone and addressed the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the management refuses to pay this man the sum which he has won, claiming that his card was badly printed. This is only a pretext. I have examined the card

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and there is no justification for the management's claim. The management is trying to welch on its obligation."

The assistant manager stepped forward immediately to reply. Cornelius's speech had obviously had a genuine effect.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this young man may be adept at poetry, but he cannot see what is directly in front of him. He is attempting to take advantage of the management's generosity. Not satisfied with having won the sum of $425, he is trying to get a similar sum for someone he has just encountered. Meanwhile it is becoming late, and if this stage is not cleared immediately, it will be necessary to postpone the plans for the remaining prizes. The operator in the projection room is a union man and cannot be persuaded to remain a moment overtime; and since we cannot postpone pictures, we will have to postpone the remaining prizes unless these gentlemen leave immediately."

"You're a fine manager," cried the balcony wit.

But the audience was won over, for no one wished to lose his chance at the remaining $50. There was a murmuring of voices and someone cried out:

"Go home and give us a chance."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the old man in a broken voice. He had arisen upon seeing the effect of the manager's speech. "These people are trying to cheat me. I have won. I am a musician. I would not do anything dishonest even if I am only a musician in a restaurant," sobbing "this has always happened to me when something good should have happened. There was a quarrel at my daughter's wedding, the happiest day of my life. Now I have to live with my daughter-in-law," and still sobbing "I could have my teeth fixed with the money. They have been bad for years. Don't let them cheat me."

A counter-reaction spread, although the vulgar reference to teeth had been unfortunate. Cornelius was prepared to commit any act in order to bring a halt to the old man's sobbing: scenes, rows, disturbances in public places had always had a direct solar plexus effect upon him.

"This is a bottomless pit," said one usher to another.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the assistant manager, "although we are convinced that we are right, we are ready to put

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this whole matter into the hands of a committee of three objective members of the audience."

"Oh," said Cornelius to himself, "they are going to start the whole objective and subjective business again."

There was a pause while three members of the audience were solicited to act as judges. The assistant manager, still attempting to maintain his benevolence, offered free theater tickets for the following week as reward for jury service. A dentist, a lawyer, and the owner of a haberdashery store came forward. The dentist, a sympathetic man, immediately offered to fix Weingarten's teeth cheap, for a nominal sum. The old man ignored the offer, offending the dentist.

"Give me my money," he said weakly, almost an echo of his former voice.

The committee was given the disputed card and went into a conference in a corner. But before they had been there long, an enterprising usher found another card on which the one had been printed with a blur next to it. The card was brought up to the stage and in a moment everything was settled once and for all.

The assistant manager announced the discovery. The lawyer announced the committee's decision. The audience applauded, satisfied that justice had been done. Casper Weingarten sat down on the stage again. Cornelius looked helplessly about him, and the audience began to clap and hoot.

"Why don't you go home," said one.

"Call a cop," said another.

Cornelius stepped forth and said, painstakingly, "Can't you see that the fact that two cards have the same blur on them proves nothing. It may be a one in both cases. You are permitting yourselves to be deceived."

But the audience had decided once and for all. It was now intent upon going on with the game and then on with the show, and answered Cornelius by hoots and whistles. The ushers came forward.

And then, threatened by the ushers, Cornelius made the worst mistake.

"Be logical," he said angrily, "don't be hopelessly middle

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class about this. The management is trying to cheat an old man."

"This poet is a radical," said the assistant manager, seeing his opportunity to win a complete victory. "You heard what he just said: middle class. He is a radical."

"C.I.O." called the balcony wit, with a rising inflection on the O, as one would say "I'll be seeing *you*." The audience giggled, enchanted by this, and the cry was taken up immediately.

"C.I.*O*. C.I.*O*. C.I.*O*." came various voices throughout the house.

Cornelius recognized that nothing more could be done with the audience. He went over to the old musician, still seated upon the floor and drying his glasses again, for he was still weeping.

"Look, old man," said Cornelius, "There's nothing to be done about this. You'd better come with me."

"No," said Weingarten, categorically.

Cornelius meditated with himself for a moment and then said: "Listen, I will give you half of the jackpot. Come on before you're arrested."

"Call a cop," cried the same voice that had previously made this suggestion.

"No," said Weingarten, "I don't want your money. I want mine. Give me my money," he said towards the assistant manager.

Cornelius considered matters with himself again and came to a decision. Easy come, easy go, he said to himself, and then he told the old musician that he could have the whole jackpot. The manager protested immediately but Cornelius took the bills from his pocket and began to count them out and give them to the musician who accepted them with a guilty look and trembling hands.

The audience saw what was happening and applauded vigorously, not because it was genuinely moved, but because it felt that it ought to applaud. Such applause is heard at public gatherings when an abstraction too vacuous is mentioned or tribute is paid to a man long dead. The assistant manager, trying to move in on Cornelius's credit, came over to shake hands with

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Cornelius. Cornelius, tempted to reject the proferred hand, accepted it because he wished to cause no further disturbance.

The old man had risen and come over to Cornelius.

"Thank you very much for your kindness," he said in the estranged voice of those who have been weeping or over-excited.

"Not at all," said Cornelius formally. Both descended from the stage together.

"We will have to forego the remaining prizes until next week," said the assistant manager, "but the fifty dollars will be added to next week's total, and there will be a hundred dollars in prizes besides the usual jackpot. In addition, two four-star pictures will be playing."

The theater darkened as Cornelius and Weingarten walked to the exits, the film went on with all its soft floating figures and pleasing movement. How much actuality, after all, can an audience stand in the course of one evening?

"Are you going my way?" said Cornelius to Weingarten.

"No, I think I'll see the rest of the show. Thank you very much, much obliged," he said, still weighed by guilt.

The problem now, said Cornelius to himself as he walked through the soft-carpeted lobby, is to keep this from my mother, who will consider me Quixotic, as indeed I am. But how small a price for the sense of generosity and dignity which I now have, even though the act was forced upon me by my maudlin sympathy for the old man. Probably I have been foolish, and yet how reasonably I feel at present, and how joyous.

Saying this, in his joy, he issued into the chill and disorder of the street, the fresh air and different light striking him. The rain had ceased, but a thick fog had come upon the city. And as he walked home through this fog, in a pure enjoyment of his feeling, Cornelius recited to himself this poem by a fourteenth-century Scottish poet, halting sometimes in the middle of a line because he did not remember it too well, or halting in order to correct his imperfect accent:

> Be merry, man! and tak not sair in mind
> The wavering of this wretched world of sorrow!
> To God be humble and to thy friend be kind,
> And with thy neighbors gladly lend and borrow:

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His chance to-nicht, it may be thine tomorrow;
Be blithe in heart for ony adventure;
For oft with wise men, 't has been said aforrow,
Without gladness availis no treasure.

Mak thee gude cheer of it that God thee sends,
For wand's wrack but welfare nocht avails.
No gude is thine, save only that thou spends;
Remanent all thou brookis but with bales.
Seek to solace when sadness thee assails;
In dolour long they life may not endure,
Wherefore of comfort set up all thy sails;
Without gladness availis no treasure.

Follow on pity, flee trouble and debate,
With famous folk aye hold thy company;
Be charitable and humble in thy estate,
For wardly honour lastes but a cry;
For trouble in earth take no melancholy;
Be rich in patience, if thou in goods be poor;
Who lives merry he lives michtily;
Without gladness availis no treasure.

So saying, joyous, with a sense of having done proudly what he wanted to do, and with the fog hiding from him most of the street and surrounding his head, he came back to his house and the room where he would be once more alone.

November 14–17, 1937

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Steven Marcus

FACES OF FREUD

In nineteen hundred thirty six, on the occasion of Freud's eightieth birthday, Arnold Zweig sent a letter to the great old man in honor of the event. In addition to being a writer of some parts, Zweig was an ardent believer in Freud and his teachings, and an analytic patient of longstanding seniority. In the course of his celebration of Freud's achievements, Zweig remarked that he was toying "constantly with the idea of writing your biography—if you would permit me." Freud promptly replied that he was "alarmed by the threat that you want to become my biographer." There are so many better and more important things for Zweig to do and to write about, he continued:

> no, I am far too fond of you to permit such a thing. Anyone who writes a biography is committed to lies, concealments, hypocrisy, flattery and even to hiding his own lack of understanding, for biographical truth does not exist, and if it did we could not use it.
>
> Truth is unobtainable, mankind does not deserve it, and in any case is not our Price Hamlet right when he asks who would escape whipping were he used after his desert?

These hyperbolically sour remarks merit thinking about. The problematics of biography, even in these advanced times, remain as unresolved as ever. And the problematics of the biographies of great men, the makers of history, the shakers and movers, the culture heroes and captains of destiny lead the way, as they have always done, in difficulties, hazards, ambushes, and traps for the unwary and the wary as well. As a rule, the great have been idealized by their followers and contemporaries. In the name of truth and reality they are subsequently, again as a rule, de-idealized. The great now seem less than great and their followers seem absurd. Something's wrong here. It has now become the turn of the de-idealization to be seen as excessive and sometimes false and hence to be itself undone. And so it goes. The great by their self-generated words and autonomous deeds have changed the

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course of history; every great man is the result of a convergence of cultural-historical forces and an expression of them. Who's on first, what's on second, and both have to be true. X was thought of in his own time as a greatly original mind. Generation II of scholars begins to learn that X was in fact "anticipated" in his greatly original achievements by Y, Z, A and B, pigmies of talent to a man. X is as a consequence dissolved back into these "anticipations." His achievement it is now understood was to assemble the original work of others and present it to the world at the right moment in culturally appropriate and marketable form. A salesman, a promoter, not a genius. Generation III comes along and surveys this mess of mediocrities and levelled-down indistinction. It's not kosher; it doesn't smell right; it looks lousy. They begin to reexamine the anticipations and discover that not all anticipations anticipate and some anticipate less than others. It turns out that all the minor poets who "anticipated" Shakespeare and to whose example he owed so much—it turns out that when they are all put together they don't add up to a comedy of errors. It turns out that Plato is not really a forerunner of either socialism or Adolph Hitler. Every hero has a valet and most have a mistress. Valets and mistresses tend to have an inflated taste for memoirs and faithful recollections of the great man undressed. He's got a pot and wears a girdle; he scratches himself, picks his nose and farts; he can only get it up when she wears a red wig and makes believe she's his aunt Sadie. He weeps when he suffers a loss. He broods over reversals. He would rather have been Jimmy Durante than the Napoleon of theoretical physics that he is. He is the father of his nation, but what he is really proud of is his skill at rotation pool. All of these are true. All of them matter and don't matter. All must be made part of the record, taken due account of, assimilated, and appropriately discounted. And there's no end to it. Ever.

These embroilments are part of our normal biographical transactions with the great. The idealizings and de-idealizings are steady elements in the continually shifting cultural weather. In this sense even such nastinesses as Lytton Strachey have a certain value. By exposing certain falsenesses, pretensions and inconsistencies among the Victorians, he and others like him forced a later generation to begin to rediscover how truly eminent the eminent Victorians were. The accent and tone of the recovered eminence were in the nature of things not what they were originally asserted to be. How could they be? But that's one of the processes through which new cultural meanings are created. The recent publication of Gladstone's diaries, for example, reveal that

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he was not simply a hypocrite when he brought prostitutes home for tea and tried to reform them. They reveal instead the terrible temptations he was tormented by, how he struggled against them, how he punished himself for them, how he tried in fact to live up to the impossible moral ideals and demands of his culture and what an immense toll that effort exacted.

The life and biography of Freud represent a peculiarly acute and perhaps unique instance of these difficulties. When it comes to him it is not simply a matter of idealizing, de-idealizing and then the correction of both again, although such considerations doubtless enter into our dealings with this figure. Freud created psychoanalysis, and part of that creation was the institutionalized development of a new kind of relation. It is known as transference. Freud began the work of psychoanalyzing western culture, and he has become such a personage in that culture that almost everyone who has come into touch with his work experiences some kind of a transference relation to him. It seems to be a curiosity in the nature of this relation that it cannot be put aside, transcended or eliminated. It is on the contrary a constitutive part of one's relation to Freud in culture, and perhaps the best means we have of dealing with it is by conscious recognition and acknowledgment that this is indeed the case. It cannot—at least for the foreseeable future—be made to disappear.

That there was much in Freud that positively promoted such a development is abundantly clear. For example, quite early in Zweig's correspondence with him, Zweig takes to opening his letters with the salutation, "Dear Father Freud." There is no evidence at my disposal which suggests that Freud ever responded with some German equivalent of "Hey, cut it out." To be sure, there were certain limits that even Freud could not help but observe. When Zweig responds to the report of a new flare-up of Freud's cancer by stating that part of Freud's endurance of his suffering is done for mankind—since his continued existence allows him to go on thinking and writing—the old man characteristically replies:

> I still have so much capacity for enjoyment that I am dissatisfied with the resignation that is forced upon me. It is a bitter winter here in Vienna and I have not been out for months. I also find it hard to adapt myself to the role of the hero suffering for mankind, which you so kindly assign me. My mood is bad, little pleases me, my self-criticism has grown much more acute. I would diagnose it as senile depression in anyone else.

The sinuosities of thought and feeling in such a passage—its dramatization of a highly complex, dry ironic consciousness—is for this reader

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a source of lasting pleasure. It nonetheless remains true that after a certain point in his life Freud's fundamental relation with the world was that of a transference. The primary role which he envisaged for himself was that of a father, or of some variation upon paternity. He was a pater familias at home; he regarded his followers as sons and grandsons, heirs and assignees. Those who broke away, in whom the transference became negative, were regarded as either disloyal sons or sons who could not fulfill (or put up with) their sonship. And the psychoanalytic movement itself was of course his essential child, his special creation.

It should therefore come as a surprise to no one that Ernest Jones's three volume biography, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, should contain within it considerable evidence of transference. It was in the first place an official biography. And Jones himself was one of Freud's early and most loyal disciples and lieutenants. Despite its immense length, it had to be selective. Its monumental wake left behind a mass of detritus and debris. Moreover, in the interval since it was written new material has come to light. There is every reason then for a book like Paul Roazen's *Freud and his Followers* to be published. Roazen's method has been to poke around in what was left behind and left out. He interviewed more than one hundred people who either knew Freud personally or who had some connection with or interest in the history, particularly the early history, of the psychoanalytic movement. He also gained access to Ernest Jones's papers, an archive of information in themselves. Some of the material that he has found—to which I shall turn in a moment—is of a certain pertinence.

In addition to this, however, anyone who is interested in Freud can not have felt comfortable with the manner in which those who have control over the biographical material left behind by Freud have been discharging some of their responsibilities. Until recently, the volumes of Freud's correspondence that have been published have been edited in a style that has to be described, to put it mildly, as defensive. When one has taken all questions of tact and discretion into account, there is still no way to support or condone the editorial practices that have been pursued in the various volumes of Freud's correspondence that have been published during the last twenty odd years. Freud's letters have been bowdlerised; incomplete sets of correspondence have been put out; letters have been cut without marks of omission; sometimes when an ommission has been noted, it is utterly impossible to know what principle of deletion has been followed; and sometimes (as in the important Freud-Abraham correspondence) it is impossible to make out whether any principle has been followed at all. This kind of

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editorial hanky-panky is altogether out of keeping with the spirit of Freud himself and with the idea of psychoanalysis, not to speak of such minor considerations as scientific and scholarly integrity. It was an absurdity and a vanity on the part of Freud (great men are entitled to both) to object to the idea of a biography of himself. It was worse when those in charge of his estate—once the Jones biography had been decided upon—started putting out volumes of laundered letters. Incidentally, one has to add, the analytic profession has not exactly covered itself with glory by its muted response to these circumstances. Only recently, with the publication of the Freud-Jung letters has a Freud correspondence in its integrity appeared.

What has Roazen turned up, and what do his findings amount to? On balance, and a little to my surprise, Jones stands up remarkably well. All transferences to the contrary notwithstanding, Roazen is able to make very little headway against him. He makes a few minor corrections here and there. (Jones's single major lapse, his unbalanced and misleading account of Ferenczi's last years, had been brought to public attention years ago.) And some omissions of varying degrees of importance are made good on. Roazen is quite useful in reminding us how unorthodox Freud's own practices could often be (sometimes during the summer he would have a patient stay in the same house with him), and how other analysts who knew of this could at the same time claim that such procedures, when carried out by others, were "unanalytic" in character. Moreover, what for Freud "might have been temporary or ad hoc measures became, in the hands of some devoted followers, unchangeable rituals." The orthodoxy seems to have been strongest among Americans.

Every movement of any significance brings about rivalries among its adherents. Psychoanalysis is no exception to this rule, and Roazen gives something that resembles a blow by blow account of the infighting and elbowing for place among Freud's followers. Some of these differences have meaning for the history of the movement; others are more in the way of idle gossip and chatter and do not deserve to be dwelled upon. And about the same thing holds true of the irregularity of the sexual lives and habits of the early generation of analysts. The amusing story of how it was Jung and not Freud who was awarded an honorary degree at Harvard's tercentenary celebrations deserves preservation. As does the anecdote of how on this same occasion Jung was introduced to a large audience in the amphitheatre of the Massachusetts General Hospital as "Dr. Freud." It is also of interest to learn again and in some detail about Freud's undertaking to psychoanalyze

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his own daughter, Anna. But exactly what one is to make of this extraordinary historical oddity is something else again.

No movement can escape scandals, skeletons in the closet, secretly buried bodies, episodes and incidents in which almost no one emerges creditably. Roazen has unearthed two such incidents of some significance. The first has to do with Ruth Mack Brunswick, an American who became one of Freud's special favorites. Acting with characteristic originality, Freud had at one time Brunswick, her prospective husband and the husband's brother simultaneously in analysis with him. Brunswick lived almost exclusively in Vienna between nineteen hundred twenty-two and nineteen hundred thirty-eight. One particular sign of how highly she stood in Freud's regard was that he referred his famous former patient, the Wolf-Man, to her. Brunswick was not, however, in good health. She suffered from a variety of ailments, some of which involved severe pain. She began to prescribe pain killers and sleeping pills for herself, and by the mid-30s had become an addict. (She appears also to have been addicted to Freud, since she was, with some interruptions, in analysis with him from nineteen hundred twenty-two to nineteen hundred thirty-eight.) She returned to America and practiced here until her death at the age of forty-nine in nineteen hundred forty-six.

The scandal is that despite her addiction, Freud continued to send her patients, and so did other analysts afterwards. Someone seems to have told Roazen that "apparently there was no overt decline in her ability to analyze until almost the end." Roazen is ordinarily skeptical and often suspicious, but this time he seems to have been taken in. In the first place, the assertion on the face of it is hardly credible. And in the second, I happen to know someone who was a patient of Brunswick's beginning in nineteen hundred forty. This former patient, who was then a young woman of thirty-five, reports that Brunswick's behavior was frequently and notably aberrant. Often she would nod off in the middle of a session; on a number of occasions she conducted lengthy telephone conversations during the hour, sometimes ordering things for her household from department stores. The patient, who naturally had no way of knowing that the analyst seated behind the couch was a drug addict, would now and then summon up the courage hesitantly to ask Brunswick why she was behaving in these ways. The usual answer was the patented foolproof analytic trap. The question was turned back upon the patient, who was asked to explain why she was so anxious. In other words, Brunswick's behavior was transformed into the patient's problem. Part of the power of the classical analytic

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situation is that nothing that occurs within it is irrelevant to what is going on within the patient. This is one reason for the general rule of analytic abstinence, and one reason why standards for analytic candidates ought to be stringent. Misused as it was here it becomes an instrument for dissimulation and harm.

The larger scandal of this situation, however, touches upon Brunswick's analytic colleagues. They knew about her unfortunate addiction. They were in a position to blow the whistle and effectively shut her down by referring no other patients to her. They did not. Why they did not, and what and whether it had anything to do with her special relation to Freud, remains unknown. But that they behaved with professional irresponsibility seems quite beyond doubt.

The second scandal was brought to light by Roazen in nineteen hundred sixty-nine when he published *Brother Animal*, which was in effect a first installment of *Freud and his Followers*. This work was an account of Victor Tausk's short and tragic life, and it was in addition an ominous sign of things to come. Tausk was a gifted and troubled man who after trying several different careers decided to become a medical doctor, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. He enlisted himself as a disciple of Freud's, and moved to Vienna. He and Lou Andreas-Salomé were lovers for about a year. After serving in World War I, Tausk returned to Vienna and tried to enter into analysis with Freud. His request was refused—Freud was not comfortable with certain kinds of disturbed people. Instead Freud recommended that Tausk enter analysis with Helene Deutsch who was herself being analyzed by Freud. This arrangement soon became unworkable, and Tausk (who talked about almost nothing but Freud during his own sessions) began to interfere with Deutsch's own analysis with Freud. After three months Freud intervened. He told Deutsch that she had to terminate one of these relations. Deutsch chose to stay with Freud. Tausk then decided to marry (he had been married and divorced before), and chose a former patient of his own. Three months after the termination of his analysis, and on the day before he was to obtain his marriage license, he committed suicide.

These are the essential facts of the episode. Although it would not be precise to say that the psychoanalytic profession performed a cover-up of the case, it is also quite undeniably true that the profession didn't present it as a glowing incident in the history of the movement. Roazen dug around and put all the facts together. What he did with those facts is something else again, and *Brother Animal*, like *Freud and his Followers*, is both an interesting and an awful book. Sometimes

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Roazen literally invents things. For example, he writes that Freud "was jealous of Tausk's opportunity to have an affair with Lou." There is simply no evidence to justify such a statement. Whatever evidence there is points in the opposite direction. Years later Freud wrote that he had admired Lou immensely and had been attached to her "curiously enough without a trace of sexual attraction." (see Jones III, 213 for sources.) Roazen says things about Lou which are palpably untrue, magnifies Tausk into being a kind of genius (which it was not) and insinuates that Freud was really responsible for Tausk's suicide (which he was not). Here, in a typical sentence from *Freud and his Followers*, is the way Roazen represents the relation between the two. "Each man believed he was unique and a genius and feared being destroyed by the other." The only thing that's wrong with this sentence is that nothing in it is to the point. Whatever each may have believed, only one of them was unique and a genius; and whatever each may have feared, neither of them destroyed or could destroy the other.

Roazen's disingenuous dealings in *Brother Animal* were enough to give one the pip, and that's exactly what they gave to K. R. Eissler, who in nineteen hundred seventy-one published *Talent and Genius* in an effort to annihilate Roazen. Eissler's work of demolition was effective enough, but in the end it amounted to overkill. It was in *Brother Animal* that the circumstance of Freud's having analyzed his own daughter was first made known to a general audience. In his response to this part of Roazen's account, Eissler first states that it was widely known all along (which it was not), but then goes on to argue that if Freud decided to undertake this deviation in clinical practice then he had to be right. This is truly putting the wrong shoe on the wrong foot. As I've said earlier, one doesn't really know how to regard this piece of Freud's behavior. As I contemplate it, I find myself being struck with sentiments of dismay alloyed with some kind of horror; but along with this puzzlement and disapproval I feel a touch of jealous admiration for the audacity and *chutzpah* it involved. Freud was not beyond good and evil, but in this instance he gave it a good try.

Roazen's problem as I've already implied, is that his ambivalence is generally out of control. One of the things Freud discovered is that there is almost no relation between human beings that is free of ambivalence. And certainly emotions of ambivalence occupy the center of the transference in a variety of both positive and negative forms. What typically happens with Roazen is that he regularly asserts that Freud is a genius, superman and prophet while simultaneously representating him as the villain of the piece and a petty neurotic tyrant. In

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this sense *Freud and his Followers* picks up where *Brother Animal* left off. Now, however, Roazen has a second figure to dispose of and discredit. That figure is of course Ernest Jones. Recognizing the distinction of Jones's work on the one hand, he goes about his work of discreditation on the other as follows. In the opening pages of his first volume Jones speaks of the reluctance he felt at undertaking the huge task of the biography and then gives his reasons for having yielded to the suggestion that he nevertheless undertake it. Roazen writes that "Jones had been seeking this job for some years," and refers to a letter in the Jones archives written in nineteen hundred forty-six by Jones to a publisher in which, according to Roazen, "he eagerly gave his qualifications as Freud's biographer." This permits Roazen to state that "in print Jones sounds reluctant," meaning that he wasn't, and the inference must inevitably be drawn that Jones was not telling the truth from the very outset and hence that what he says is suspect.

This is utterly typical of Roazen's way og going about things. Let us leave to one side the method of innuendo and the irrepressible ill will. Let us also accept the summary of the unquoted letter from the Jones archives. What is most striking about Roazen in this context is his psychoanalytical naiveté. It is apparently inconceivable to him that when faced with the daunting prospect of writing a life of Freud, Jones could have been ambivalent himself, that he could have badly wanted to do it and also not want to do it. (After all, Jones had written the classic psychoanalytical study of *Hamlet*.) Indeed one can in part understand some of Jones's idealizing remarks about Freud as an excessive response to the unconscious ambivalence he had to have vis-a-vis his own transference figure. But no, it's better to imply mendacity.

Roazen continues in similar style: "Despite what a reader of the biography might be led to think, Jones's own relation to Freud was relatively distant. Jones was first of all a Gentile, and Freud could be suspicious of non-Jews. . . . Furthermore, Jones was in London and therefore an outsider to events in Vienna." I happen to have been a reader of Jones's biography, and what I was led to think was that Jones was one of Freud's earliest followers, the leader of the movement in England if not the English-speaking world, and a member of the original committee that was formed around Freud—after the upheavals caused by the breakings with Adler and Jung—whose members were commonly thought of as Freud's seconds-in-command. I have no way of knowing whether that is relatively close or relatively distant. There is, however, another bit of evidence that might be relevant. On the occasion of Jones's fiftieth birthday in nineteen hundred twenty-nine, Freud wrote him a letter which contains the following passage:

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> I have always looked upon you as a member of my intimate family circle and will continue to do so, which points (beyond all disagreements that are rarely absent with a family and also have not been lacking between us) toward a fount of affection from which one can always draw again.

Is this to be read as one of Freud's Epistles to the Gentiles? Is the old man playing the Jewish Pecksniff of psychoanalysis again? (Was "always" *really* "always"?) I suppose it has to be regarded as some kind of achievement on the part of Roazen that he forces us repeatedly to commit this sort of nonsense in asking ourselves these questions.

One more example, and we are done with Jones. Roazen states that "Throughout [the biography] Jones wrote with a set of unconscious taboos." There's elegance! And he's right, absolutely right. Name one book in the history of civilization that was not written "with a set [sic] of unconscious [sic] taboos [sic]." That kind of formulation suggests again how inward Roazen is with psychoanalysis.

When Roazen moves on to Freud, things become, if possible, even worse. Sometimes he uses evidence with a nitwit's sense of significance. In a passage that discusses Freud's attitudes towards masturbation, Roazen writes that on certain occasions "Freud could seem emancipated from conventional pieties: the problem with masturbating, he is reported to have said, is that one must know how to do it well." This "report," we learn, is in a letter from Hitschmann to Jones in the Jones archives. Well, I for one couldn't care more or less if the letter was from Masters to Johnson in the Kinsey archives. What can such a statement, utterly decontextualized, mean? Its effect, however, is to make Freud seem as much a dunce as Roazen. Or there is this gem on Freud's father and his significance for history:

> In reality Jakob Freud was hardly the powerful man one might expect as the father of the discoverer of the Oedipus complex. . . . The desire for a strong father may have played a role not only in Freud's formulation of the Oedipus complex but also in its acceptance by many who have been in a position parallel to Freud's, uneasy about their pasts and yet ashamed of repudiating it.

The slippery logic of this passage slides from an actual *discovery* to a motivated *formulation* to a compromised *acceptance* whose effect is to nullify the discovery announced at the outset. In addition, there is about as much psychological *sachel* in it as there is in a wooden Indian. Or as there is in this priceless remark about Freud's mother: "such a woman could well call forth from Freud the intense kind of emotions he would later call Oedipal." To which, one supposes, the

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appropriate reply might be, "I guess so. She actually seems to have been his mother."

Or there is this one: "With his family background, needing to create himself and be his own father, Freud wanted to be cared for and at the same time passionately desired to be independent." You bet. Unlike all the rest of us, Roazen's ability to reduce almost anything to platitude and twaddle is simply infallible. "Freud fostered the illusion," he writes, "that the more perfect an analyst's technique, the better the therapeutic results. An analyst can of course base his judgments only on what he sees, but the fact is that much clinical material looks different to different people." As for the first sentence, perhaps he did; and then again, perhaps not. As for the second, it is both true and feeble-minded at the same time. It was Dr. Johnson who once remarked—of a poet whose work he cordially detested—that a man could write like this forever if he would but abandon his mind to it. Roazen's book amounts to a continual act of such abandonment.

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Roger Shattuck

FACT IN FILM AND LITERATURE

1.

> . . . the steep street leading to the château . . . is remarkable for its small resonant cobblestones, which are always clean and dry; for the narrowness of its winding course; and for the quietness of its houses.
>
> These houses form part of the old town, and are overlooked by its ramparts. Some of them, though built of wood, are still sound after three hundred years; and the variety of their timbering contributes to the originality that gives this quarter of Saumur its special appeal to antiquarians and painters. You are not likely to pass these houses without being impressed by the enormous transoms set like blackened friezes over most of the ground floors, with grotesquely carved faces jutting out at either end. . . .
>
> On this street the tradesmen's ground floors are neither shops nor warehouses. Devotees of the Middle Ages would recognize here the workshops of our forefathers in all their original simplicity. They are mere low-ceilinged rooms—without shop windows, showcases, or glass doors. They are dark, deep, and undecorated, either inside or out. The door will open in two solid halves, both roughly barred with iron. The upper half folds back inward; the lower swings to and fro, jangling a bell every time it does so. . . .
>
> Go in. A neat bright-eyed young woman, with ruddy arms and a white kerchief, puts down her knitting and summons her father or mother, who comes out and sells you whatever it is you may want. . . .
>
> If you follow the windings of this picturesque thoroughfare, its slightest detail arousing thoughts of the past, its general aspect plunging you into a half-unconscious reverie, you eventually come to a gloomy recess: here, dimly visible, is the entrance to "Grandet's place."

Forty years ago Eisenstein showed us that nineteenth-century novelists, particularly Dickens, wrote as if with a movie camera implanted in their heads and employed what we can see as a recognizable montage principle to order their sequences. No one should be surprised to discover that the opening section of Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet* (here translated by Henry Reed) sounds like an elaborate shooting script, with instructions to the camera when to "go in." Balzac carefully sets off in quotation marks the first quiet words for the

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sound track voice-over: "Grandet's place." He even labels the mood of the whole passage: "picturesque." The book was written four years before Daguerre sold his process to the French government. But Balzac was obviously thinking of something beyond pretty pictures. This window on the world, this moving eye-piece trained on objective reality, is already in search of the sheer physical presence of a photograph. The things of this world are there, waiting to be seen and "taken" as they stand. They are all potential documents, and the prose that records them strains to create what the photograph finally seemed to furnish naturally, by its optics and chemistry: certification that things are what they appear to be to the attentive eye. Our a priori categories of space and time do miraculously correspond, on the human scale, to the characteristics of a visible and palpable universe that will imprint itself on emulsion. With every exposure, the sealed box or camera reenacts the lengthy evolutionary process through which the fundamental features of the "natural world" have been stamped into our genetic material. Furthermore, the moving picture (unless it is run backwards) seems to bear out our sense of causation, the third a priori category, as something belonging to the physical world around us. Since radical doubt has become the companion of conscious thought in the modern world, we stand in constant need of this ontological reassurance. Like the realist novel since the eighteenth century, the photograph, both still and moving, offers us security and comfort about the outside world. Novel and film seem to embody a basic documentary impulse, the impulse to certify the world out there as knowable, even familiar.

In different hands, however, Balzac's camera, his portable window on objective reality, changes into a very disconcerting device. The following quotations form a skeleton version of the opening pages of Robbe-Grillet's *In the Labyrinth*.

> I'm alone here, now, fully protected. Outside it's raining, people are walking in the rain with lowered heads. . . . Outside it's sunny. . . . Here the sun does not enter, nor the wind nor the rain nor the dust. The fine dust that clouds the polished horizontal surfaces . . . comes from the room itself. The lamp-shade projects a circle of light on the ceiling. . . . Outside it's snowing. . . . But the clipped sound of steel-tipped heels on the asphalt . . . cannot penetrate here, nor any other sound from outside. . . . On the waxed wooden floor the felt slippers have traced out shining paths, from the bed to the bureau, from the bureau to the fireplace, from the fireplace to the table. And, on the table, the shifting around of objects has also disturbed the evenness of the film. . . . Outside it's snowing. Outside it has snowed, it was snowing, it is snowing.

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The crisp, seemingly dispassionate sentences continue inexorably through 250 pages until we reach the second first-person pronoun, *me*, as the last word of the novel. Along the way Robbe-Grillet evokes endless windows and apertures, all leading into slightly different universes held together by implied yet uncertain links. He destroys the security of Balzac's window through repetition, by multiplying it out of existence. We are in Wonderland, far from the picturesque. When so many conflicting worlds are proffered almost at once, the documentary effect tends to cancel itself, and no sense of exterior reality is posited. Something quite different is going on. Between the opening *I* and the final *me*, the deceptively cool prose presents the imaginings of a hyperconscious narrator splicing together (or tearing apart) his fictional worlds. Instead of looking through a window on the world of objects we are looking at a *mirror* that reflects an unsteady yet somehow imposing *subject*. As ominously as a camera aimed back at its holder, or at itself, *In the Labyrinth* documents the vagaries, games, and obsessive images of a consciousness. Robbe-Grillet's novel records the fourth of our a priori categories, the self, ruminating in a highly particularized void. Such a minute exploration of self, unrestricted by traditional unities of action and character, fatally destroys the first three categories: space, time, and causation. The resultant interior monologue jumps every time it seems about to stand still.

When Robbe-Grillet (with Alain Resnais) broke into film, he filled his first work with mirrors and intricately framed spaces. In *Last Year at Marienbad*, the photography shows nothing that is convincingly there. We watch a perpetual and aching absence. The content of the film converges backwards upon a near-demonic state of mind. After the opening sequence with the hero's or narrator's voice speaking on the sound track, and with the scenes shown through his eyes, the film has to abandon the "first person" technique and show X out there in the flesh, in the "third person." The initial experiment is not sustained, but the intention (camera=eye=I) modifies our reading of the entire film. A similar technique in films like *Dr. Caligari* has attracted the term "expressionist." Robbe-Grillet comes close to appropriating that designation in his "Introduction."

> There is no last year, and no map will show you the location of Marienbad. That past has no reality outside the moment in which it is strongly evoked; when it triumphs, it has become the present, as if it had never ceased to be.
>
> The cinema is probably the means of expression predestined for this kind of story. The characteristic of the image is its presence.

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For our purposes and to contrast with Balzac's methods, I should like to call this mode *inverted documentary*. Robbe-Grillet's "story" does not reinforce our sense of external reality. Rather the screen images express the power that beholds them: an imagination, a mind brooding over an obsession. One senses a comparable effect, I believe, in *Citizen Kane*. Even when Kane himself is in the picture, the deep focus photography serves to reveal a subjective, not an objective, universe.

For a third tentative category of documentary, literary examples are hard to come by. Though close to autonomous, "Jabberwocky" and many children's counting rhymes refer glancingly and playfully to assumed objective and subjective worlds. Before he was propelled all the way out of literature by disgust, politics, and religion, Hugo Ball, the true founder of Zurich Dada in 1916, composed a series of sound poems in this self-reflexive style:

> gadja beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori
> gadjama gramma berida bimbala glandri glassassa
> laulitalomini
> gadja beri bin blassa glassala laula lonni cadorsu
> sassala bim
> gadjama tuffm i simzalla binban gligla wowolimai
> bin beri ban . . .

These nonwords approach a purely nonreferential or abstract use of sound, autonomous entities or self-contained images that document only the medium itself and nothing external to it, subject or object. This tendency I shall call *auto-documentary*. Despite the experiments of Emile Cohl and Len Lye, and more recently of Kubelka and Frampton, film has had almost as much difficulty entering this domain as literature has. We recoil before a work empty of content, a work that does not represent some part of the world we know. There is no proverb we have turned so thoroughly into law as: nature abhors a vacuum. Art has not yet freed itself from this condition. We supply missing referents when they don't seem to be there.

I am proposing a three-way distinction that applies to both film and fiction: *documentary* (pointed outwards, objective), *inverted documentary* (pointed inwards, subjective), and *auto-documentary* (pointed at the medium itself, self-reflexive, purely formal). The distinction allows me to make a statement that is not so trivial as it might seem. All film is documentary, in one or more of these categories. I believe the history of film will bear me out. Furthermore, the three categories are arranged in logical sequence. Film has developed so rapidly as to make

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historical discriminations very difficult. Méliès had vaulted ahead into an *auto-documentary* style of fantasy and screen magic before he himself made the first documentary. (See below.) However the primary power of film has never ceased to be its capacity to affirm the existence and appearance of things out there, with an articulation that sound or word alone will never match.

Developed to its fullest and given the authority of historical perspective, this belief in the basically documentary nature of film emerges in Erwin Panofsky's article "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures." It would be very difficult to outbid his valorization of film in 1934:

> The processes of all the earlier representational arts . . . operate from top to bottom, so to speak, and not from bottom to top; they start with an idea to be projected into shapeless matter and not with the objects that constitute the physical world. The painter works on a blank wall or canvas which he organizes into a likeness of things and persons according to his own idea. . . . It is the movies, and only the movies, that do justice to that materialistic interpretation of the universe which, whether we like it or not, pervades contemporary civilization. Excepting the very special case of the animated cartoon, the movies organize material things and persons, not a neutral medium, into a composition that receives its style, and may even become symbolic or pretervoluntarily symbolic, not so much by an interpretation in the artist's mind as by the actual manipulation of physical objects and recording machinery. The medium of the movies is physical reality as such. . . .

Now this statement from one of the most eminent art historians of our era is both widely honored and little discussed. The claims it makes for the movies radically modify traditional esthetics and suggest something like a Renaissance in art because of the appearance of a new medium. The article also provides the last crucial step in Kracauer's *Theory of Film*, whose subtitle, "The Redemption of Physical Reality," derives from the above passage out of Panofsky.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, when improved printing techniques and the spread of journalism were preparing a vast new public for the novelist, Stendhal liked to speak in a similar vein. His two favorite expressions to describe his novels were *des petits faits vrais* (accurate details) and *un miroir*. For all his literary megalomania, Balzac spoke of himself as the humble "recording secretary" of society. By the end of the century Zola certified himself as a scientist and cited his friend Claude Bernard, a celebrated physiologist, to prove that the novel is "experimental" in the same sense that medical science is

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experimental. But they all really knew better. Balzac knew as well as Baudelaire, who said so in print, that his practice as a novelist made him a "visionary," not a recording secretary. And Zola's famous letter to Henry Céard in 1885 describes how he made "the leap up to the stars on the springboard of exact observation." Despite their claims to recording the real world, these three French masters were really transforming the world into their heightened vision of it. We value them for the power of their imagination.

In this light we may look more closely at Panofsky's claims. I have no dispute with his proposal that the arts operate from top to bottom. We have Gestalt theory and the whole of Gombrich's fine book, *Art and Illusion*, to confirm this analysis. In perception as in representation, the whole is prior to the parts. Film, we are now told, changes the basic order of events. First of all, Panofsky virtually eliminates the conscious agent: He spirits away the artist, or director, who might have imposed some preexisting shape or form on the work. Then it is possible to assert that the medium itself, the motion picture, organizes and manipulates material reality. Does he mean that the camera is simply there, framing, making marvelous images? Not quite, for in the last sentence quoted we learn that the medium is not the camera but "physical reality." In any case, there is no escaping the implied materialist conclusion that physical entities somehow form themselves via the camera into film. I find here the artistic equivalent of spontaneous generation, materialism carried to the verge of animism. The camera, unheld by human hands, merely being a camera, permits reality to redeem itself by materializing on film. Panofsky is too intelligent not to qualify his statements somewhat. But he continues to write in the passive voice without supplying a recognizable agent for these momentous events. Anyone who follows recent film criticism will notice that Panofsky's views anticipate those of many structuralists and semioticians in their campaign to eliminate the *auteur*. In France critics like Metz and Bellour seek every means possible to attribute the creation of a film to the qualities of the medium itself and to an undefined collective force hovering just beyond the reach of their analytic vocabulary. *Ecriture*, they would demonstrate, has a life and a will of its own that usurps the projects and imaginings of any working *auteur*.

Forty years ago, therefore, Panofsky produced an extreme affirmation of the film as document, as if it could make itself out of undifferentiated reality. Even André Bazin ventures onto this same ground when he compares the sense of the document in nineteenth-century novelists

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with what it has become in film. "Facts for their own sake had not yet acquired that kind of ontological autonomy, which makes of them a succession of sealed off monads, strictly limited by their appearance." Does he really mean to suggest that facts alone, a stream of unprocessed images, will constitute a film?

What then is a fact? I work with this rough and derivative definition: a fact is a verifiable statement about reality in the light of a hypothesis. Without a hypothesis, everything or anything is a fact claiming equal time. Now a hypothesis, a mental frame which reduces the world to a manageable scale and permits us to separate facts from irrelevancies, is the product not of material reality itself but of an independent shaping mind. By conjuring away the agent, the shaping mind of the artist, Panofsky places himself in the position of implying that a film (particularly a documentary film, one supposes) generates itself, grows naturally out of material things.

Two people at opposite ends of film history, have tried to make reality itself the director. Lumière set up his camera in the street when a factory was letting out; Warhol trained his camera on the Empire State Building. Mere passage of time did the rest. But it seems almost unnecessary to point out that even this hands-off, styleless approach arises from a set of deliberate decisions about subject, setting, length of shot, and camera placement. Physical reality clamors on all sides. You have to choose. *Last Year at Marienbad* looks as if its theme and style were inspired directly, virtually created, by the baroque spaces and magic gardens of the castle where it all takes place. Yet the conception came first; Robbe-Grillet defined the mood and formal composition of the film before he and Resnais discovered Nymphenburg. Among contemporary filmmakers, Frederick Wiseman could plausibly lay claim to a style that allows events to tell their own story without commentary and without tricks. His self-knowledge gives us a second truth to match the starkness of his images. "My films are totally subjective . . . my response to a certain experience." *My films*, the man says. Not property: accountability. He made them.

Physical reality will not redeem itself or even reveal itself through the mere existence of the camera waiting there to record something. Panofsky must have known better, and one wonders that his breathless announcement of a new era for art has gone so long uncontested.*

*A great deal of debate has taken place in France on topics dealt with in this section. Useful summaries of current thinking can be found in Michel Marie, "L'impression de la réalité" (in *Lectures de film*, Ed. Albatross, 1976) and in M. C. Ropars-Wuilleumier, *De la littérature au cinéma*, Colin, 1970.

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2.

In the half-forgotten files of pre-World War I fiction, there exists a remarkable and amusing story by the poet Apollinaire. While he and Picasso and their friends were trooping to see *Fantômas* and Nick Carter movies, Apollinaire produced a little object lesson in the philosophy, economics, and technique of documentary film. For four lighthearted pages the "Baron" of Ormesan, international confidence man and "false messiah," talks about his International Cinematographic Company, set up in Paris for the commercial filming of "reality only." By making a few discreet bribes the Baron has sneaked his cameras into the bedroom of the President of the Republic and the inner circle of the Grand Vizir. The only thing he and his associates have not captured on film is a crime. Since their esthetic principles prohibit any mere simulation, it is necessary to stage a *real* crime, one actually carried out. In a secluded villa rented under a false name, they capture a passer-by and force him at gun point to stab to death a young couple, also seized in the street. Donning a mask, the coerced murderer in evening dress performs with style for the camera. The victims die pathetically after a struggle, also in front of the camera. The Baron and his crew cover their tracks and leave, along with the murderer. The next day, as planned, the police discover and identify the victims (a foreign diplomat and his mistress), yet cannot solve the crime. It makes headlines for a whole season. The last touch is the best. The police never suspect that the film of the murder, which earns the Baron a small fortune in Paris movie houses, shows the real thing rather than a restaging.

The tale is worthy of Poe. From it one can draw a set of principles to which anyone concerned with the documentary could well pay attention.

1. Film making is first and foremost a commercial enterprise. (No flimflam here about film making as the modern equivalent of medieval cathedral building.)

2. Since theatrical reenactments are immediately detectable as inauthentic, only filmed reality will have wide appeal to an audience.

3. One may, under certain circumstances, force or "hold up" the course of events in order to produce the reality one seeks, but on the condition of going all the way and facing the real consequences, legal, moral, and otherwise.

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Apollinaire's lighthearted irony cuts far deeper toward the fetishes and taboos of moviemakers than we would like to admit, and than any huffy manifesto of cinéma vérité. Do we really believe the contrary of these three principles? About the market economics of film we are merely uneasy, affirming stoutly that business and art can lie down together. The second principle raises awkward problems, particularly for critics. No one ever questioned the right of fiction film to exist. Does that mean we accept the equivalence on the screen of the real and the feigned? Most critics pride themselves on being able to spot immediately any trace of staging in a "documentary." If they can, what have they accomplished? For we waver greatly in our beliefs about the truth of art versus the truth of nature.

The third principle, remote as it may seem at first from our concerns, affects every aspect of video news coverage and comes into play whenever a cinematographic record is made or even considered. For the mere presence of the camera modifies the context in which an event takes place—the social equivalent of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Vietnam War protestors learned to stage their demonstrations for the TV cameras, and camera crews learned to go where the demonstrations would be staged. Everyone cooperated in a beautiful feedback arrangement that paralleled what you can observe in miniature every time a photographer wanders among the wedding guests or aims his machine at the audience in a big hall. They pose for him by acting natural. Near a camera, everyone is in cahoots to behave as if it weren't there. Does this coy attitude produce documentary? At the other extreme, what should one do about the sado-masochist films recently imported from South America and which show (one hears) genuine cases of criminal violence?

The Baron of Ormesan in Apollinaire's story surely "participated" in his documentary treatment of civilized natives in the streets of Paris. The camouflage principle (compare Poe's "The Purloined Letter") by which his authentic film passes for insignificant fiction carries lingering esthetic and ethical overtones for our era of systematic authenticity in the media. Apollinaire made a genuine contribution to the tiny corpus of film "literature."

3.

In 1898 the upheaval in France over the Dreyfus case had reached a point of real crisis. Colonel Henry's suicide and Zola's trial had led to the recall of Captain Dreyfus from Devil's Island. In August he finally

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went on trial in Rennes, a safe two hundred miles from Paris. No other set of events in that era rivaled the high drama and concentrated human interest of this spy scandal in which the fate of a whole society seemed to be at stake. Just the preceding year Méliès's short version of *The Sinking of the Battleship Maine* (using model ships and simulated underwater sequences with divers) had demonstrated the commercial appeal of current events as film subjects. Both Méliès and his competitor, Pathé, decided to try the same tactic: to restage the Dreyfus events practically as they happened, using actors and simple sets in their studios. For some reason—the subject, the possibilities of the style, the growth of the medium—Méliès chose this occasion to make his first long film. We don't know whether Méliès visited the trial at Rennes, but we do know that he started filming while the trial was still in progress and used photographs out of "L'Illustration" as models for his sets and direction. Sadoul tells us that this film, composed of twelve twenty-meter reels to run a total of fifteen minutes, "was shot with scrupulous attention to realism." Objective in appearance, it also emphasized sequences that favored Dreyfus's cause. The Pathé film, shot only a few weeks after Méliès's version, ran half as long and apparently was less intent on an accurate reconstruction of the events.

Willard Van Dyke has put forward a definition of documentary that cannot be overlooked: "a film in which the elements of dramatic conflict represent social or political forces rather than individual ones." Given its resourceful use of the technical means at its command and its imaginative treatment of social issues, Méliès' *L'Affaire Dreyfus* can file a strong claim to being the first significant documentary film. Both its intention and its effect on contemporary audiences carried an authenticity equal to that we hope for today with hand-held cameras and elaborate excursions into privacy such as *An American Family*. Some participants in the trials even thought they recognized themselves in the staged film.

The Dreyfus Affair is the first of three films I want to bring up because of their borderline status between fiction film and documentary. As pathological cases carry special meaning for the psychoanalyst, these three hybrid works are particularly revealing about how the film as realistic image overlaps the film as imaginary reality.

History is ultimately made by historians, yet we do not yet treat it as fiction. A film that carefully reconstructs a set of historical events and does not stretch them around the contours of a trite story line has every right to be considered a documentary. François Truffaut's *The Wild Child* was released for regular commercial distribution as a feature film in 1970. No mention was made anywhere in the publicity

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of the word "documentary." Comparatively few reviewers in France and elsewhere treated it as anything more complicated than a fiction film based on a historical case. Few of them appear to have consulted the original documents, though they were available and in print in both French and English. The film's faithfulness to the known facts, however, has a bearing on its meaning and value.

Itard, the doctor who defied the expert diagnosis of idiocy to work with Victor for five years, wrote two careful reports. Truffaut followed these documents soberly and almost classically, with constant attention to contemporary detail in costume, furniture, and setting. The fact that Truffaut himself took the "role" of Itard with a minimum of acting, somehow authenticates the whole effort to respect historical truth. "The experience has left me with the impression not of having acted a role," writes Truffaut, "but simply of having directed the film *in front* of the camera." The spoken narrative (but not the dialogue) comes directly out of Itard's two reports. Nothing was added merely for effect. In fact the tone of the film remains so restrained and detached that it omits the most melodramatic scene of all: in a moment of near desperation Itard held Victor (who was terrified of high places) out the fifth story window in order to arrest the boy's tantrums by a form of shock treatment. The scene should have been included. At the same time Truffaut felt free (or obliged) to give the film a hopeful ending and to change the setting.

The historical facts are these. After five years of training from one of the most patient and imaginative teachers of all time, Victor reached a plateau. He became manageable and responsive, but he never learned to talk. The boy whose origins had set people arguing all over France lived on in obscurity with a guardian or keeper, dropped out of Itard's life, and died without notice aged about forty. Truffaut cuts things short before the plateau and implies continued progress for the future. (At the close of the film Victor returns of his own accord after running away. Itard tells him, "You are a young man of great expectations. In a little while we'll go back to work." The boy smiles as he walks slowly upstairs. The ending strikes a distressingly false note for anyone who knows the record.

However Truffaut's film survives these flaws. It portrays the genuine scandal of a completely unsocialized child whose behavior removed him much further from our understanding than most animals. It also shows the devotion of a highly civilized doctor to rehabilitating this child against nearly insuperable odds. The conduct of both individuals can be seen as truly remarkable. Solitude and society come into very close contact in this historical documentary. I

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know of no child or young person who has not been deeply impressed by the film. It recreates "real" events that begin to form something like a racial memory.

My third film is *Marjoe*, made by Howard Smith in 1972. Unlike *The Wild Child* it was distributed explicitly as a documentary and received mostly brickbats from serious critics. The film treats a case of self-confessed sham and greed in a successful evangelistic preacher. Since the only foil presented for Marjoe's former hypocrisy as a tent-crowd manipulator seems to be his nervous rapping about his past with the hippie film crew and his rock star attitudinizing at a Village party scene, one soon becomes impatient with the unfocused character portrait. Has this dazzling hustler really redeemed himself? Has he touched any bedrock of honesty or truth? The closing sequences show Marjoe, with his black girlfriend and his dog, aping his successes as gospel pitchman. By now one should have found the focus. Through a gradual chemistry that gives the film its force, it is all these sneering scenes that come through as the most meretricious of all, themselves mocked by the reverse twist of the film as a whole. Marjoe is still a talented charlatan, just working a new medium.

One is left with two complementary impressions. First, the film does catch the power of language, amplified and chanted and danced and whispered and exploded, as a creative yet dangerous instrument for waking people from the sleep of mere living. Audio recording alone could never do justice to the stage movements of such performances. Second, the same "authentic" revival meeting scenes that unleash the wizardry of language also portray the genuine yearning of the crowd to transcend itself and its inhibitions and to reach some higher realm of pure feeling. Marjoe's fraudulence fades to insignificance beside the ravenous hunger with which his words are devoured. He never sees or understands the reality that surrounds him—the reality of lived feeling. For him it remains a commodity. This weird documentary of an incorrigible fourflusher emits moments of ironic poetry that touch both the people in the picture and the people watching the picture; never Marjoe.

With all their shortcomings and despite the critical confusions they have provoked, these three hybrid films testify to the continuing effectiveness of the documentary even in its impure state. For purposes of billing and classification, we would probably do well to forget about strict discriminations. Truth may be stranger than fiction, and art may be truer than reality. But the impulse to document the world—particularly in the first, objective, window-on-the-world sense that I proposed at the start—will continue to contribute substantially to the total process by which movies are made.

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POEMS

Killarney Clary

UNTITLED

Someone else. And the empty time, now, in all I gather and promise. I think I can stop losing by a conversation I will have. I cross my fingers to break a habit. Where did I get those lavender sachets; where is Helen now.

The light and time move through the day together; I clear them from all the things around me, clean them until the receding and coming-up are mine. They re-form as annoyances. Where did I put that. When was the last day.

Across the cold beach, Helen and I walked toward the rocks. Up to see the sunrise. It would be light for hours before we saw the sun itself come over the cliffs. But it was too early to talk about anything. Neither of us would have been there alone. Back in the city, Helen walked from her house to mine in the summer and when I opened the door she didn't seem relieved. She wouldn't drink any water. She would stay for only a few minutes. Tired and hot. Sweat and the powdery dust from the streets and dull leaves—on her pale, fat arms and legs, on her damp shift.

It wasn't Helen but the things that seemed to become bored with me. The way her skin and hair were things. So I remember all that in the worst times. When I'm surrounded and have no fear and no regard, across years of waiting I draw my rehearsed exchange. Would you undermine it, Helen, for the best, for now.

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Richard Elman

CONTEXTUALIZATION

Desperate remedies
call for desperate measures
Jacob Boguslav

Sometimes in dreaming we are given
greater gifts such as fairies know exist
for others, as if we might still find
such treasures in our hands when
the eye, after waking, credulous,
blinks down at its own impulses,
and fingers no longer tremble
at being so bold to keep what they have
from others. Then some may want to shout
we are here, as if it were important
pleasure had not been avoided again;
pleasure has not been avoided again:
the parched lust to drink water,
shade hovers always under foot,
the less the more it doesn't always so,
but spot our brows with heavy leafy blows
and we are in that shadow's eye again
when the sun holds the lawn at dawn
under orange and purple stripes of light
and there is so much silence in us then
if looking told a thing it would
endure one very beautiful warm sob.

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Michael Brownstein

from SECOND APART

One thing is certain
having gazed far away into the distance
it is the image in the mind that binds us
filling her pockets with unripe walnuts
her head over the vanished children
where the reeds grow
and the medlar, ruddy and tough
the snake that swims across the pool
its little chin just ruffling the water
rush carpets spread over the cold red tiles
shining links of a fine-wrought chain
belonged to me personally
so stiff with stage fright
studded with turquoise
framed in the pillars of a vast
the ritual of cutting the cake
deflating the nougat bastion
that pursued the snakes and lizards so vigorously
but softens and yields to autumn
cherry trees quivering in the red November dawn
couple living together in the country
bids the snail put out its horns
though many years have passed
and seemed to me sumptuous
sugary grapes and hard yellow peaches
whose hearts were a deep, blood-stained purple

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Two Poems by James Venit

HOME MOVIES

What if I took an hour apart? At sea one moves one's own monster, the Czar in the desert, in the woods, the bar, the mountains. What if these previsions are like blocks that fill with snow and little chips falling from the facade become characteristic dancers. Adjacency has implications, but the ordinary citizen sees only the bug. What if I shouted?

So you are the little girl who squirts bathwater, air wick, flowers. Your laughter *is* like a tree cracked by lightning, but out on the golf course

The rain is falling and drips over the machinery like oil over all the parts, the rifle barrels, the cannon barrels, the onion barrels, the florist's barrels. It would cloak you in something heady like a sensation, but highly polished and technical like a hat

I am not insisting

We are all good conductors and now we have had a fatal accident, now we are in the period of economic recovery, later we enter the age of lettuce and sprouts. Those who saw the paper hats and dimes in butter. Those who sought the forbidden huts. Those with the damaged hand, limbs of their children

It was clearing until you swept up something empty as the window finally brings you a street. Though that's what's meant by "understanding:" a radio that bursts into tears like a rainstorm, and a grey period waving the tricolor of brown, brown, and brown.

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LITTLE CHAPTER

Hot and dusty and attached to you
as the lid is to its eye
the sleeping man is his own hand
grown weary

Why is the sky more lyrical than a desert?
With dimness and mezzotint
more passional than a rose
the octaves and generals of the sky
and the aphasia of these petals

Just now my nose was taking a tour
of the harbor
In a complex way this scene has no people in it
though the shape of an eventful foot
will soon evolve

It is the size nine shoe of my father
humming from Don Giovanni
and towards me in this portrait
you fall like snow
a façon de parler
for the sexy pile

When each face kindled, flushes
with the maculate ingredients of silence
I know the theorems of these residues
balconies a long way from the sky

The whales becalmed by mists
on nights
the gods for whom we are a little finger.

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David Lehman

OF SELF AND SOUL

"*Tell me the truth, and maybe*
If, with my eyes forced open
While I remain entrapped in sleep,
I can succeed in forgetting my name
For the length of a laugh or the cough
Which officially opens the concert, then
We can hum military melodies to ourselves
As we march, and feel like generals come home."

"But falsehood flies when flags are unfurled
From the windows which watch us as though
Our wounds are on public parade, and so
The signatures on all things mock me
And you, connecting us by what we cannot resist
Or know, though everything that's invisible exists."

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Paul Hoover

FORTUNE

Someone swift
will enter your slow life.
He is everything
you have forgotten,
the gathering of muscles
you never used.
He is what you thought you saw,
but blinked away, the sum,
plus one, of missed glances.
You are thin.
He is thinner.
You are strong.
His rungs are broken
like his footsteps
climbing into you.
Horizons are the white unravelings
heaped on the plate
where he eats half your food.
In his room
the curtains are stacked
in tight white squares
on each side of the windows.
In yours
the red part of the pear
faces the keyhole.
Perhaps you are something
he just remembered,
the twitch that wakes him up in church.
Perhaps you are snow
building up over a sliderule.
When you are the act of falling
he is the vertigo that came just before
rising like a feather to tickle
that worn spot on the ledge
where you were standing.

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Two Poems by Harry Fainlight

YOU HAVE WASTED YOUR LIFE

And yet how, strangest, this very realisation releases
That miraculous stream that flows uphill;
Up over the mountains of the evidence against me
And down to water all that fertile valley
On the other side,
Valley where now I walk
And with suddenly awakened wingbeats, birds
Spring up all around me; O rise to soar
Into that clearest blue their singing fritters them
Away into 'til, lost there, silent
They drop back somewhere I have never seen.

THE BAYSWATER ROAD

Glum dawns standing round a tea-wagon
Were usually all that came of it;
Yet of those two lives, divided only
By the width of the gutter, how was I to choose?

Ceaselessly that glittering traffic of appetency
Dazzled by one side of me.
Yet all the sweeter for my delinquency
Stars deep within the locked park grew.

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Eileen Myles

AN ATTITUDE ABOUT POETRY

My attitude about poetry is somewhat
this, I should be doing something
that pays more money.
I love comfort, bright things for myself
and the ability to splurge on people I
like, to be able to dislike
people who have bucks.

That is the poetry of money.
Money is a friend,
a comfy chair when you need to sit,
free walking. Buying rides.
Zoom in on this one.
Avoid that one in a helicopter ride
around Australia. Bury
my sorrows in an incredible meal.
You like that star. I buy you that car.
Never drunk but gliding on the
ethers of everyone's
drunkenness.
It trips me up,
my lightweight love of cash,
it clicks on my teeth.
My words jingle.

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Maxine Chernoff

FOR DAILY USE

"A goddess of misfortune,
a myth of legitimate youth.
Stop." is what my telegram read
and why I later said
October was a punitive drink.
Coffee and landscapes, beards and towers
all aching for the bewilderment of November.
An old woman rested her panic
at a smoky intersection.
I requested the blue highway
on which a march played incessantly
like Disney rehearsing a revolution. . . .
It is December. The day travels
with sagging nylons. Unlike the tension
of barking for violence in spring.
Short hours in which to learn
the discreet balance of breath,
what lies beyond it
and what whispers "hemisphere"
always in autumn.

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Harry Mathews

A HOMECOMING

for David Kalstone
on his birthday

"It is in changing that things find repose."

Forget the inscriptions on papyrus and clay, those marks of distinction: our first persistent scrawls were smudged with brown crayons on the green, almost black blotting paper of Merovingian times. They were times without time, faceless, dateless, like a kaleidoscope perhaps, but one with no light behind it. The blur achieved some definition when, against a hurricane-light sky,

Charlemagne clumps onto the scene. His horse is caparisoned with purplish scrolls that tinge a namable century with a barbaric redolence, although not for long: continental Europe soon dissolves in new conflicting murks, while we console ourselves with King Alfred under his comfortable brown wrapping paper and rainy skies.

Around the year one thousand we move out of childhood. Things ripen in a warm grayness that grows continuously brighter, until we enter, as into a walled garden, the twelfth century's resplendent, blanched neoplatonic light, overcast with a faint Buckminster Fuller shade of rose. Its candor survives through subsequent periods—a suffused pearl in the thirteenth century, in the fourteenth a stealthier, more introspective gray, and then we are plunged into the fifteenth's

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eery green, speckled with a blood-red that submerges our vision in the sixteenth century's turgid red, a dark red not without its restless warmth, but desperate nonetheless: and the despair is confirmed as we stumble with thickening history into the seventeenth century, a pestilential coal-dark purple threaded with faint silver (turbulence, exultations among skulls), although matters become more orderly

towards the end. There's a door with a promising glow beyond it, it opens, and we stand in eighteenth-century orange light—perhaps more a rich beige, a broad indoor splendor that might persuade us to linger if we didn't know that soon we shall pass, with well-concealed relief, into the examination-book blue of the neighboring nineteenth century which beams down its busy expanse with determined self-satisfaction,

through gusts of demolition and machinery. At its far end, we easily find the gate in the standard picket fence through which, taking off our jackets, we stroll into our very own, legal-pad yellow age, on whose pale lines we can, if we aren't careful, unconsciously slide through sumptuously codified disasters right past

this moment. We don't. We stop.
You are standing in front of us, in the light, with a pad and pencil.
You have written down your name, and your new age.
The latter is a point in a progression that approaches as its limit
Not theoretical infinity but existential zero. You are about
To reach it, again. You hold the pencil point
Close to the whiteness of the page. The calamitous moment of inscription
Is at hand. What else will you set down? You set down
Those tools and turn away into the darkness. You put away ideas

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Until a particular time, and you go out into the so-called
darkness
Under rain, under stars—perhaps those of your birth. The stars
are neither
Angelic or inert; yet you can read them, shepherdlike, as
millennial reminders
Of the journeyings of matter from a first point to a last (both
Points being the same), of the incessant resistant varying,
As we lurch from work to play, from shivering to sweat, from
loving war
To bloody peace—the shifts of our life stirred by funny or
bloody denials
Of the love that we don't choose but that unswervingly
transports us
No place, except to a point where we began, where you now
begin.

Marilyn Johnson

OUR MOTHERS WERE SISTERS

Now the riverbed is lined with concrete.
The banks are geometric slopes.
The water no longer meanders
but flows down a shallow slot
dead center in the floor.
The trees are gone.
The floods are gone.
But I know the concrete wasn't always there
paving the place where I could also be Richard.

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Together, we would crawl under the chainlink fence
and slide down the hard dirt slope to the sand.
Beneath the pillar of the bridge,
engraved with our favorite graffiti—
"To hell with the parade,
let's go watch the elephants fuck,"
we would talk about things
like the dream of how it feels to fly,
when gravity disappears
like a slow motion movie.

Our mothers were sisters,
but that night they locked me out of the room.
I cried because I wanted to settle down
in the water with you,
in the tub with the claw feet,
to feel your skin slippery with soap
in that room that smelled of the pink oval
wired to the inside of the toilet.
But they locked me out.
I was no longer allowed to touch you
or sleep in the same bed with you.

And when they finally told you
that your mother had gone insane
you ran away without me
to eat oranges
stolen from the groves along the river.

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John Haffenden

DRINK AS DISEASE: JOHN BERRYMAN,

Elated by what he thought was his redemption from alcohol achieved at Hazelden, Berryman ended 1969 in hopes that the tide would run and run. "I am extremely happy," he reported to his friends, "working very hard on *Hamlet* for a course on it I'm giving this winter for the English Dept. But I'm nearly done and am branching out back into comprehensive biographical & critical Shakespearian studies. A few months ought to see my biography at 500–600 pages, when I'll cut it back to some 450 and give it to my amazed & delighted publisher." The critical biography of Shakespeare had first been drafted in 1951–52. Now, within a month of starting afresh—without looking at the draft—he spoke of being almost through Chapter III. He had also sketched seventy lines of a poem to be called "Washington in Love," of which thirty lines were an "impressive" rendering "of his accepting, at the insistence of John Adams, the continental command." Berryman claimed to have put together a collection of three of his stories and twenty-five essays ready for publication. For reading, he had undertaken Trollope's *Last Chronicle of Barset*, *Genesis* in daily doses, and Vaillant's *The Aztecs* with a view to a summer trip to Mexico.

Still, for all that the work was prancing, there was a new element of hesitancy in his attitude towards it. He now asked for reassurance and opinion. He was to send the first three chapters of the biography (covering the eight plays of Shakespeare's early period, and the *Sonnets*) to William Meredith for "suggestions." Sir Walter Greg, who had given his imprimatur twenty-five years earlier to certain of Berryman's suggestions about the editing of *King Lear*, was now dead, and his passing left Berryman doubtful about his credibility as a modern Shakespearian scholar. The times were fluid, research and discovery bounding: "Off here in the Middle West I suffer a little from the feeling that I am working in a void."

A further fresh start this January was a project to write what he called *A New Life of Christ*. He sketched the contents:

Preface

I The Marcan Outline
II Christ's Ethical Teaching

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III The Apostolate
IV Christ's Ecstasy & Transfiguration
V The Fourth Gospel
VI The Resurrection Appearances

Appendix: the Church (Pentecost & Paul)

For this *Life*, Berryman made no claims to original scholarship. It was to be a digest, with readability its chief virtue, aimed at children (Martha and Paul the foremost) for their congenial instruction, as well as at adults for their pleasure and perhaps even profit. He worded the Preface shortly and carefully:

> The materials for a biography of Christ are the Synoptic Gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke), the Fourth Gospel, and Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. The Apocryphal literature adds nothing reliable to these sources. It has been repeatedly denied that a 'life' can be constructed from them; but many men have tried, with varying results of interest, and the present volume is simply another attempt, made upon reflection and with candor. This is the most important human personality, and the most important career, of which we have knowledge; and it befits us to try to understand them. Our knowledge is not indeed what we would wish it, the Evangelists' interests being for the most part only in certain respects coincidental with ours. But our knowledge is extensive and real.
>
> I hope I have acknowledged enough of my multitudinous indebtedness to show that practically nothing here makes any claim to originality.

There was a modesty and understatement here that he had not been used to expressing about his work. The following weeks contain a telling sequence of events which it is important to set out, because the result was that he ended up devastatingly drunk and in a hospital. It would seem that after being discharged from Hazelden on a gust of euphoria, Berryman swelled his work solidly for some weeks until he collapsed, not so much from outside causes as from his own failure of nerve. He was admitted to the Abbott Hospital on February 26, and discharged about ten days later. His psychiatrist wrote, "for no apparent reason, he began drinking once again and had remained intoxicated for 2-3 weeks." There was assuredly no apparent reason: as another doctor put it to me, "it is incredibly difficult to unravel the whole bag of John's psycho-dynamics." Berryman was in an overstimulated condition. Elated by the strides the work was taking—in Shakespeare, in a long poem, in ordering old work—there occurred what he called a "revolution" on February 4th: "Day before yesterday I

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suddenly wrote a *Lyric*, my first short poem in many many (sic) years." The poem was "Her & It,"written in one hour of the afternoon, complete with "8 changes" and originally including this boastful stanza:

> I'm hot these 20 yrs. on his collaborator
> in *The Taming of the Shrew*
> and I know many other things abt him
> nobody else understands. I'm hot.

He had some cause to brag: he had done a considerable amount of work on Shakespeare, was certain of his discoveries in that line, and now 1970 saw them rejuvenescent. Here too was a poem written in heat which celebrated the fact; it seemed to him, after a long lapse in substantial creativity, uncommonly successful: "Intoxicated with it, I wrote another, and in the evening two more. Yesterday, two more." The poems were flowing red-hot as never before, but the poet did not stop for self-criticism. While inspiration lasted, he seemed to regard the verses as finished and immaculate, but his self-doubts became evident when he began to ask friends for their approval of his efforts: "I can't wait to hear what you think of them. Be candid though, and if you find any blunders or numb spots for Christ's sake point them out. These poems aim at nothing short of *perfection* of tone."

Admittedly he had sent out poems before, but they had been as gifts, without looking for feedback. The danger signs might have been clear: outwardly overjoyed, inwardly Berryman was prey to dire doubts about the quality of what he was writing. After some days of helter-skelter work, he sent a telegram spontaneously to his former student, Valerie Trueblood: "Telephone me at 11 o'clock tonight. I have been overworking madly. Men need a break. Flying to Chicago tomorrow to see you, if you agree." But Valerie Trueblood did not pick up the telegram for two days. Berryman began drinking heavily, prompted presumably by great agitation and anxiety about the reception his poems would meet.

The friends he had applied to were all practising poets in the forefront of critical opinion. Clearly they would judge by high standards, especially since Berryman had asked for nothing less. Equally, however, nothing less than their abject praise would have served his precarious state of mind. His ambivalence could be perceived, but not its morbidity. Richard Wilbur recalled:

> The arrival of the manuscript was prefaced by a number of telephone calls from Minneapolis, over a long period of time and the damned-

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> est hours, in which John expressed anxiety over his new poems, or contrariwise showed a great confidence in them and in the novelty of their form. . . . The manuscript, when it came, seemed inferior to the Dream Songs, yet interesting in some of its materials, and fascinating in some of its transitions and collocations. Out of a sense that he was feeling his way from one style to another, and should not be discouraged, I think that I soft-pedaled my reservations and concentrated on the good qualities of John's new work. I did say to him that some of the lines and passages needed more brilliance of the kind he could supply, and that he ought to write an additional poem or passage in which he explained that he was *not* writing a full literary autobiography. . . .

William Meredith was equally shrewd in his judgment of Berryman's motives:

> Since when does your critical judgment need support or comparison? You are one of the most considerable poets of our time, and have become so by a process of lonely, pig-headed self-editing. You could tell good from bad and true from false in your work long before I could (in your work). As a loving friend, I am *bothered* at your wanting either criticism or praise, at this point and with this urgency, from (Elizabeth Bishop and Richard Wilbur) or from Mark Van Doren or me. An insecure Berryman is a contradiction in the adjective. When you have a hot streak, you know it. If, as is possible, you're not having a hot streak with these poems, (and it would be my opinion on the grounds of the ones you've sent me you're not) you suspect if you know that, and you sit on the poems doubtfully until they declare themselves.

Meredith could hardly have been more perspicacious: Mark Van Doren endorsed his sentiments: "Your letter says *very* wisely what I've been trying to say to John on the phone—with no result except long silences and then screams." In short, most of his friends were doubtful about the quality of the poems. They were not to know that he was disproportionately vulnerable to even a misheard whisper of criticism. Where he looked for sanctification, they could only give him back his human nature. Being the man he was, sick—not from vanity, but in the flesh—he turned to drink.

Within a few days, Berryman was admitted to the Abbott Hospital in a state of alcoholism. The narrative summary by Dr. Donald M. Mayberg included these remarks:

> He was unable to walk and so entered the hospital voluntarily. Physical examination was consistent with that state of alcohol withdrawal in that he was markedly tremulous and showing nystag-

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mus and palpable liver, bruises on both shins and inability to walk or stand.

This was to be the last time that Dr. Mayberg treated Berryman, whom he described to me as an "exquisitely sensitive man." The treatment was no more than "a holding action." Dr. Mayberg's function, as he put it, was "only to maintain him alive, functioning, and productive." Berryman was back in the hospital again for three days from March 17th: diagnosis, the same. There, he discovered,

> It's all girls this time. The elderly, the men,
> of my former stays have given way to girls,
> fourteen to forty, raucous, racing the halls,
> cursing their paramours & angry husbands.
>
> Nights of witches: I dreamt a headless child.
> Sobbings, a scream, a slam.
> Will day glow again to these tossers, and to me?
> I am staying days.

At 7 o'clock in the morning after his admission, he wrote a poem about another patient, Tyson, who had arrived in the hospital with the words, "I have come to announce my death." The poem, "Death Ballad" expresses painful witness to the spectacle of Tyson and Jo, who were "United in their feel of worthlessness/ & rage," and ends with the sympathetic consideration that one way to save oneself is to care for others, as Berryman himself was doing:

> take up, outside your blocked selves, some small thing
> that is moving
> & wants to keep on moving
> & needs therefore, Tyson, Jo, your loving.

Anything ugly or painful was a source of excessive hurt and suffering to Berryman. He was both sensitive to suffering and sensitized by it. As Dr. Mayberg observed, he would weep "copiously for the trials and tribulations of those with whom he came in contact." In addition, he would extract suffering from others in order to augment his own suffering. It was Dr. Mayberg's opinion that separations from loved objects were the key to his constant and chronic depression: one such separation is commemorated at about this time in the poem "Heaven," which concerns a woman who, as a draft of the poem reads, "was killed in a car incident soon after she married." The same draft includes the

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lines (emended in the published version): "She forgave me that golden day my lust for her/ but what might persuade me to forgive her loss?"

He left hospital this time after 3 days on March 20th. Three days later he was readmitted "with a flight of ideas, excessive creativity, hypersexuality, over enthusiasm and excessive drinking." Dr. Mayberg saw clearly Berryman's feeling that sobriety was not productive for him as a lover or as a writer. The feeling was delusional, although there might be some romantic foundation for the belief that he had to suffer in order to produce. Dr. Thomes gave him a general physical examination which revealed "excessive cerumen, some shortness of breath and tachycardia." He was accordingly treated with supportive medication and individual and group psychotherapy, and, as the phrase had it, "made an uneventful recovery." The discharge diagnoses were: "1. Cyclothymic personality. 2. Habitual excessive drinking. 3. Impacted cerumen, both ears." Such brief hospitalisations would rely heavily on medication, though it was obvious that he was medicating himself so heavily with alcohol that he increased his tolerance for anything else.

The first week of April brought another period of excessive drinking, at the end of which he was back in the hospital. The patient, according to Dr. Mayberg's chart, "was lethargic, stuporous, uncoordinated and diaphoretic on admission." He suffered from a marked tremor. There was no doubt that his alcoholism was acute and chronic. Again, three days later, he was discharged with quantities of Librium, Haldol, Thorazine, Tuinal, and multivitamins, after a course of treatment called "supportive with withdrawal." The vortex created by his undisciplined use of alcohol had become intolerable either to witness or to live with. Berryman and Kate kept an appointment with the psychiatrist on 24 April. Dr. Mayberg noted:

> Kate has made an ultimatum about drinking—At the end of the term he must go into Hazelden or I will leave. None of us can tolerate John's deterioration—It's too painful to sit by & watch.

Until April 1970, Berryman took alcohol for the blood of his life, the force behind his poetic powers. Then—at last—he understood the indisputable fact that "Alcoholism is a fatal disease. 100 percent fatal. Nobody survives alcoholism that remains unchecked."

He did not go back to Hazelden. Instead, on May 2nd, he entered the Intensive Alcohol Treatment Center at St. Mary's Hospital, Minneapolis. Berryman was a man diseased by drink, having exhibited over the years all the symptoms of chronic alcoholism, including projec-

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tion, manipulation, blackouts, and euphoric recall. The *Patients' Handbook*, given him on arrival at the Unit, declared that:

> Alcoholism and other chemical dependencies are chronic diseases affecting the total personality and all the interpersonal relations of its victims. Chemically dependent persons typically suffer progressive deterioration of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Their addiction to mood-changing chemicals produces this havoc.

John Baudhuin, an undergraduate student in English literature and himself a poet, was the orderly on duty the night Berryman entered treatment. He had checked the waiting list earlier that Saturday evening and was quite surprised to see Berryman's name; Baudhuin was the only one on the staff that night who knew of Berryman's reputation. Chris Fall, the Ward Secretary, certainly did not recognize the wretched figure when he arrived. "Who's Moses?" she asked, to be told he was a Pulitzer prize-winning poet. John Baudhuin went down to the admitting desk, and remembers feeling surprised "that such a man of wit and genius could be so incredibly broken down and so ordinarily intoxicated. . . . I went through the usual admitting procedure. His beard at the time was untrimmed and shaggy, his eyes hollowed out, and there were large blisters on his hands from wayward cigarettes. He trembled a bit, and talked incessantly. He was still quite intoxicated. After the admitting procedure and a brief interview with Kate, I had to attend to other duties." Berryman then parked himself in front of the nursing station and proceeded to chat volubly to Chris Fall. Baudhuin returned after a while,

> and then sat to listen as John quoted excerpts from everything written and perhaps from some works yet to be written. He offered some passages in Greek, then a few haiku poems in Japanese, which he then proceeded to translate for us. He stood up and sang an old blues song, and he later offered some rather garbled philosophy. Beneath the wit and charm and the alcoholic haze, I think he was incredibly lonely and acutely aware of the deteriorated state of his life.

According to Vernon Johnson's book, *I'll Quit Tomorrow*, the patient "goes through admission and detoxification, if needed, and spends twenty-four hours under observation. He is in bed, with a medical regime for withdrawal and a routine medical checkup. Contrary to popular belief, physical withdrawal usually presents no major

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problems and can be handled simply with good medical management." Dr. George A. Mann, then an anaesthesiologist, now Director of the program, remembers Berryman's withdrawal as being vigorous. His state of nutrition was very poor. He stayed in withdrawal for a long period of time, and was physically ill for at least three weeks after admission, with cold sweats, insomnia, tremulousness, nausea, inability to eat, and severe anxiety. John Baudhuin remembers Berryman sometimes pacing up and down most of the night, threatening suicide if he did not sleep.

He was so toxic that he would hallucinate a great deal. In this connection, one of the cogent differential diagnoses that must perhaps be made about Berryman is whether or not he was psychotic. Dr. Mann thought him psychotic only when toxic. When he was not toxic, he would express most of all an overriding anxiety, a terrible sense of inadequacy for which he would overcompensate with a loud voice and bragging. This, what the jargon would call "input," was basically a self-protective device, preserving the defences which were his very enemy. Berryman himself knew in the back of his mind the cause of this mechanism: in his edition of Trollope's *Last Chronicle of Barset* which he had read only a few months before, he marked for particular attention a line that speaks of "the arrogance which so generally accompanies cowardice." Berryman was probably not then truly psychotic except when drinking. Dr. Mann was left with the impression that Berryman had a great fear of insanity and of suicide. He felt he was insane or was going insane. He seemed in fact more fearful of his insanity than of alcoholism; perhaps alcoholism was even a manifestation of his insanity. Above all, life was totally threatening to him. He experienced great difficulty in coping with his day-to-day existence. The difficulty created in him an overwhelming, all-encompassing feeling of anxiety, what Dr. Mann called "an existential anxiety."

Two days after his admission, Dr. Clifford O. Erickson wrote of Berryman:

> After admission he became severely grossly tremulous, insomnic, experiencing some frightening dreams, and was obviously on the verge of delirium tremens. He was, of course, then placed on tranquilizing drugs, vitamins, and, also, anticonvulsants, and within a couple of days appeared to be beginning to settle down somewhat. . . .

Berryman continued to experience symptoms of sickness for some time after admission, and was kept in the room next to the Nursing

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Station. As soon as the acute phase seemed past, he was assigned to his counselor, Jim Zosel. He also began to attend the lectures that made up the mental management phase of his treatment. Their purpose was to bring him to an intellectual understanding of the primary nature of the chemical dependency syndrome. Patients would attend approximately sixty lectures on all aspects of the disease, including the effects on the brain, the operations of psychological defense systems, the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, and the emotional effects of desocialization. Clergymen and social workers lectured on value systems and spiritual impoverishment.

Jim Zosel's group met every day for two hours in a therapy session. The goals of the group are stated in the *Patients' Handbook:*

> To discover ourselves and others as feeling persons, and to identify the defenses that prevent this discovery.

Patients learn to confront and level with one another. They also learn to recognize repressions and other defenses, which are called to their attention and named while they are actually employing them.

Jim Zosel's method as counselor (and himself a recovering alcoholic) fell:

> loosely within the format of what we now call reality therapy. In this approach relatively little attention is paid to *why* the condition has come about, though in many cases that information might be useful. But lack of time prohibits it. The approach stays zeroed in on the present existence of the condition. The counselor's goal is for the patient to accept the truth that the disorder *is*—and that he *has* it. The patient has to understand all the implications of the disease and how it affects his life *now*.

Berryman joined the group shaking, smoking, and coughing. Soon, aware of Jim's intentions and methods, he felt threatened. ("The patient's chief fear is that his presentation of himself will be destroyed. That is, he feels the counselor is out to change or correct him.") He accused Jim of being sophomoric in some of the things he said. His hostility would take the characteristic form of barking and roaring at Jim whom he thought was his antagonist. Jim would attempt to bring him to his own awareness of the discrepancy between his behavior and his professed ideals and values. The counselor is not concerned with any supposed root problem. He takes alcohol as primary, with the emotional problems unresolvable until the alcoholic himself comes to terms with the pathological relationship to which he is subject.

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For his part, Berryman would like to talk about his problems, or at least to touch on them. He was very good at "intellectualizing": "He had himself very well figured out," and would retail many theories about himself. Jim would tackle the problem by trying to describe to Berryman "how he is now"; he would confront him with how he looked, and how he was behaving. At times there seemed to be progress, often followed by regressive behavior, probably because he became frightened. Berryman was, as Zosel recalled, "good at hating himself." He cut an aggressive and decrepit figure, shattered in spirit and body, and unclean. Many other staff members became disgusted with him, some because he was always, as they would put it, "talking the program"; others, themselves neat and clean, reacted badly to his arrogance and dirtiness. He would wear the same shirt for days, above which his face would both suffer and smile remarkably. He joked with his misery.

Berryman later regretted his antagonism and defensiveness towards Jim Zosel, whose function he misunderstood because he himself was in what is called the highly locked-in state of the alcoholic. The autobiographical novel, *Recovery*, contains Berryman's rationalization:

> I *admired* him all right—he's spectacular, blazing with invention and knowledge of life, wonderfully creative and quick—but I thought he was arrogant and cruel and I wasn't at all clear that he was *sincere*.

Eventually, while doing "a lot of hibernating with Carrington" (Archbishop Philip Carrington's books on St. Mark's Gospel and the Early Christian Calendar), Berryman came to open up more when Kate was present at conferences. He told how he had manipulated her, and confessed that he had acted miserably towards her; his sincerity was evident. The feeling was very believable. The spouse of any alcoholic has "her own highly developed and inordinate defense systems and negative emotional postures," which she must learn to recognise while the patient is in the hospital. She too experiences feelings of rejection and resentment. If Berryman had made a rapid recovery, it would have been very threatening for Kate, demanding a reassessment of her role. The relationship between an alcoholic and his spouse is one in which both partners become immobilized and depressed. In private counselling, Berryman spoke often to Jim about his sex life, and conceded that he was very interested in women.

On Tuesday May 12, Berryman had what he called an "exterofec-

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tive" crisis—"*real life* I mean." He had permission from Dr. Erickston to take two hours out of the hospital in order to give his afternoon lecture at the University. Jim Zosel did not approve of this licence and enlisted Dr. Mann's help to oppose Dr. Erickson's decision. According to Berryman's own account in *Recovery*, Jim came in that morning and told him:

> 'I've just talked to Dr. (Erickson) on the phone and he's withdrawn his consent to your pass.' I was horrified. I am not sure I have ever been so shocked in my life. I said, 'You and he have no authority over me, I'll just call a cab and go.' Then the heat began. 'You're shaking like a leaf.' I said, 'I don't shake when I lecture' (and on the whole that's true). 'You can't walk.' 'I can walk well enough. There's an elevator.' 'We're afraid you may have a convulsion.' 'A convulsion,' I said grimly, 'That's science fiction, I've never had a convulsion in my life.'
>
> The Chief Counsellor, sitting in, after some speech of mine about my duty to the kids, said, 'I read: grandiosity and false pride.' Later he described me as a blind man who has hold of an elephant by the tail and gives a description of it; I looked at him bitterly and said, 'You're witty.' 'Judgmental as ever,' he smiled at me.

Eventually, Berryman gave in and said he would not go. Marion Mann, who was in the therapy group at the time, grew very concerned about the class. "They were all consolation, advice, sympathy, even praise," recalled Berryman. "I couldn't understand it and did not give two ounces of gerbil-dung." He felt he was irreplaceable, but Marion Mann suggested that Jim Zosel, himself an episcopal minister, could undertake the class, "and there was (Jim) looking hot-faced at me saying, 'I'll give your lecture for you.' I felt stunned. . . . I said, 'I could kiss you!' He said—he's a maniac—'Well, do,' and so help me I leaned across Keg (who, it vaguely and irritably even in that moment came to me, was *laughing*) and (Jim) and I embraced and kissed cheeks." Berryman was overwhelmed with gratitude and self-reproach; he wept copiously and had to be escorted from the room.

Zosel remembers being "scared to death" during the lecture on St. John's Gospel. He presented some of Berryman's good but sketchy material, and some of his own. Berryman's notes emphasized the powerful, majestic elements in the Gospel. About seventy-five students turned up; they were bored and restless—probably because that day coincided with a student strike against the war in Cambodia. The students were wearing red arm-bands; Zosel brought one back to the hospital for Berryman—to his displeasure. Zosel assumed that "he was

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not politically where I was at," but Berryman detailed his feelings in *Recovery:*

> The special trouble was that my students were in crisis themselves, the nation-wide wave of strikes had just hit the University, of my seventy-five kids only one-third had shown up the preceding Thursday and my assistant was lost, he didn't know what to tell them. I had to hear them and tell them myself, the President is a very capable guy but he was handling this particular business all wrong, in fact he was *not* handling it, he had just put students and staff alike on their "consciences," what a way to run a vast institution.

"You know, Jim, you're a very affectionate man," Berryman told him after the talk was over. No one had ever said such a thing to Zosel before, but he was aware that Berryman was also addressing himself. Zosel's actions that day also served to shock Berryman into a new spiritual experience, as *Recovery* relates:

> That afternoon as I thought over what had happened I saw that a direct intervention had taken place and I recovered one particular sense of God's being I lost as a child. My father shot himself when I was twelve. I didn't blame God for that, I just lost all personal sense of Him. No doubt about the Creator and Maintainer, and later it became quite clear to me that He made himself available to certain men and women in terms of inspiration—artists, scientists, statesmen, the saints of course, anybody in fact—gave them special power or insight or endurance—I'd felt it myself: some of my best work I can't claim any credit for, it flowed out all by itself, or in fact by His moving. But I couldn't see Him interested in the individual life in the ordinary way. Now I did. (Jim) was his angel if you like—emissary, agent—I've never had any trouble with angels. Or what they call "miracles" either. I became a different man.

Berryman believed that this intervention enabled him to accept the Second Step of AA—"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity"—and wrote of it on June 4th:

> Finally you opened my eyes.
>
> My double nature fused in that point of time
> three weeks ago day before yesterday.
> Now, brooding thro' a history of the early Church,
> I identify with everybody, even the heresiarchs.

Although, in Dr. Mann's opinion, this experience of conversion was not lasting, Berryman did refer to it constantly and devoutly. It

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might also have contributed to the new responsiveness that Jim Zosel noted in his record: "P(atien)t *good* progress. Confronts & seems very much in touch with the depth of his problem. Seems less anxious & phoney. Very compassionate man who is leveling with feelings."

Berryman felt better disposed towards treatment for about the next three weeks, a temporary state which is marked in Zosel's notes. On May 19th he recorded, "Progress. In touch with deep feelings"; On 27 May, "P(atien)t making progress in spontaneity & breaking out of illusion." The trend came to a halt, however, on June 5th: "P(atien)t progressing but seems to have 'drawn the line' as to how far he will go. Gets little insight. Does not see self as insecure, inadequate, anxious or fearful. Physical health is poor. Bodily shaking continues. . . . Lots of 'God talk' which seems too pious."

Marion Mann—who witnessed Berryman's apocalyptic confrontation with Zosel and his consequent burst of cooperation with the group—always felt that he was maintaining a superior attitude. He was usually to be seen sitting by himself in the lounge. One morning, however—probably soon after his conversion-experience—he was experiencing such a sense of euphoria that he came over and kissed her on the forehead: "That's a token of my celestial love for you." (On another occasion, he spoke of a book he was planning to write about the unit, in which all the patients were to be animals. Eventually he decided against it.)

Berryman's regression after a period of happy responsiveness was self-destructive. It was noticeable that he would disable himself by a pattern of repeated failures. Whenever things seemed to be going well for him, Dr. Mann recalled, "he would go out of his way to set something up to change that."

"Keg," then a counsellor-trainee whom Berryman describes in *Recovery* as "the Knife, most fearsome of confronters," was also present when Zosel confronted Berryman about his exeat. Berryman wrote of him as "an ally against himself. Bony, with bright eyes, a sharp intellectual teutonic look, a high narrow forehead under brush-hair, . . . Thirty years old maybe, (Berryman's) height (five-ten), leashed." For his part, "Keg" felt Berryman's "super concern" for others in the group. He ached for them to get well, and yet was himself detached from the whole process—"a spectator on a drama."

Chris Fall, the Ward Secretary who had received Berryman into the hospital, herself entered treatment during Berryman's term. Berryman became a sort of father to her, and helped her considerably with her own recovery. He also helped an extremely volatile, explosive Indian

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patient: where others feared to speak, Berryman confronted the man boldly. Despite his kindness and insight, however, Berryman managed many times to turn the conversation towards the subject of suicide. He was often detached.

One memorable day, Jim Zosel tackled Berryman about a personal habit. During a conversation Berryman would go into a form of trance, his legs locked together, and hum to himself. With the words, "Let's talk to the hum," Zosel brought gestalt therapy to bear on the problem. Berryman himself remembered the occasion with awe:

> "I have a low tuneless unconscious hum: one awful morning Jim made me put it on a chair in front of me & talk to it, then move the chair, be the hum & talk back—it was hallucinatory. Finally he made me talk to what was *under* the hum."

According to Chris Fall who was present, when Berryman was asked to name the tune he was humming, he knew only that it dated from the time of his father's death—1926.

On 28 May, Berryman took his Fifth Step with the Rev. William J. Nolan; according to the book, he "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to Another Human Being, the Exact nature of Our Wrongs." The purpose of Step Five is to reduce the burden of moral anxiety and guilt which the patient's new degree of self-awareness has brought into conscious focus. The alcoholic frankly reveals his character. "In other words," advises the *Clergyman's Handbook*,

> The purpose is not simply to list a long series of wrong actions or to review a pattern of shameful behaviour; though this will undoubtedly happen as either preface or proof, but to reveal the exact *nature* of the person who did these things. The behaviour is in the past tense, but the defects are present and persistent. . . . The goal is to have the alcoholic speak of himself directly and unequivocally. . . . The alcoholic begins now to see the truth that these defects of character are the signs of his sickness and that upon their removal his recovery depends.

While he may have lacked a lasting personal faith, Berryman was able to pray for others. Of one fellow patient, he wrote shortly afterwards:

> Let one day desolate Sherry, fair, thin, tall,
> at 29 today her life the Sahara Desert,
> who never has once enjoyed a significant relation,
> so find His lightning words.

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Sherry was a bright woman for whom Berryman conceived a special fondness. He decided that he could maintain his own sobriety by caring for her; he would continue in life by gathering people he could help. He even reached a point of wanting to adopt her. While it appeared capricious, his motive was in truth profoundly felt. At about this time, he read *Please Touch* by Jane Howard, a journalist who had interviewed him in Dublin for an article in *Life* magazine and who subsequently became a friend. Berryman marked this quotation on page eighty-two: "'. . .You're insecure? Make somebody else secure'," and explained on the end-paper simply: "me > Sherry." While there was invariably a strong element of sexual attraction in his relationships with young women (as with another fellow-patient, a capable, kind, and bright woman called Lavonne), and while it was true that for Berryman sexual involvement was a chief form of coping with loneliness, it was also true that he felt a deep sense of altruism. He was impressed with the sublime significance of Step Twelve: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

Berryman tended otherwise to be exclusive and reluctant in his relationships in the Unit. He was drawn particularly to Betty Peddie, who was not in the same therapy group but occupied a room across the hall from him, and to a man named Bruce. He felt that they constituted an elite, but they did not share that sense. The "Author's Notes" to *Recovery* include a brief account of the connection:

> Liz was a foxy intelligent sumptuous woman, rich, with four splendid girls, a bad but unassuming portrait-painter, a great friend of his. Towards their discharge, a year ago, he had proposed that three of them—(Bruce) was the witty snobbish advertising director for the second largest department store in the city—start their own AA group. Incredible? Yet at the time he hadn't understood at all when (Terry Troy), to whom he had mentioned the gorgeous project in two sentences on the wing, had just said, 'Sounds selective to me' and vanished down the corridor towards some meeting.

Berryman understood the error of his selectiveness very well on reading Jane Howard's book, where he noted on the endpaper: "242, 35 vs. Bruce/Liz/me." On page 242, he marked the following quotation: "One is that heterogeneous labs are more effective than homogeneous ones—that you will benefit more if your group includes some people unlike yourself; of a different color or from a different tax bracket or a different level of management." Page thirty-five supported the senti-

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ment: "Nor would he allow persons who are diabolically experienced in the ways of group dynamics to form a group. If you find yourself in a group in which everyone talks jargon, simply walk out."

Betty Peddie felt that Berryman "tried to be friendly and gregarious, which he wasn't." He seemed to be too exclusive, arrogant, and stand-offish by nature. On one occasion in the group, he said, "I'm not worried about what people think of me now, I'm worried about what people will think in 400 years." Their conversation together consisted mostly of Berryman talking, while she listened. He would talk about himself, trying to impress her with his bragging. At one time he reported Martha's comment that "My daddy has won all the prizes," and stated, "I've slept with more women than you would believe." During another conversation, he declared, "I'm afraid I'm going to kill myself." He tried always to convey the truth that he was enormously gifted.

When a speaker failed to arrive one day, Berryman was obliged to read something. He did so grudgingly, "I get paid a thousand dollars for this sort of thing!" Students came to see him and pay homage, while he was worried about what Kate's attitude would be. Berryman would be cordial to Don, Betty's husband, when he visited the hospital; both of them had been to Harvard, and Berryman would reminisce about teaching English A. Betty Peddie's response to Berryman and her feeling of disappointment are perhaps best expressed in a review of *Recovery* that she read privately in group therapy after his death:

> When he tried to relate to other people he did make friends, but he couldn't ever be wholehearted about belonging with the rest of us; he was constantly retreating into his uniqueness, but he really thought it was all he had that made him worth anything. So he stayed shut out, and he couldn't make it alone.

Evidence of Berryman's failure to prove his credibility as a recovering alcoholic was shown by his own Step One. Alcoholics Anonymous provides in Step One that "We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." Berryman's First Step, which he took with Dave Olsen, a man commonly known as "The Big Bear" who helped with the First Step Group, was memorable as one of the best ever. Berryman himself later recalled that "Last Spring I wrote one which (Dave Olsen)—a severe judge—recently called one of the best he had ever seen," and was amazed that the man he referred to as "the savage" could have been deceived by what he came to recognize as a "merely circumstantial Step." Berryman recalled in *Recovery*:

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I must have conned (Dave Olsen) with my First Step: I don't see how. (Dave) is fond of glaring at some shivering alcoholic who has just recited his sins, leaning forward with his hands on his thighs and elbows out—a brutal type, coarse with suspicion—and booming at him, "You're a drunken *lying* halfassed bum!" *Or* he leans back, with a tender expression, and says gently: "In my opinion, you're not an alcoholic, I don't know what you're doing here. If I could drink the way you do—or say you do—Friend, I *would*." So I don't see how I got away with whatever I got away with.

Here is the text of Berryman's Step One:

Social drinking until 1947 during a long & terrible love affair, my first infidelity to my wife after 5 years of marriage. My mistress drank heavily & I drank w. her. Guilt, murderous & suicidal. Hallucinations one day walking home. Heard voices. 7 years of psychoanalysis & group therapy in N.Y. Walked up & down drunk on a foot-wide parapet 8 stories high. Passes at women drunk, often successful. Wife left me after 11 yrs of marriage bec. of drinking. Despair, heavy drinking alone, jobless, penniless, in N.Y. Lost when blacked-out the most important professional letter I have ever received. Seduced students drunk. Made homosexual advances drunk, 4 or 5 times. Antabuse once for a few days, agony on floor after a beer. Quarrel w. landlord drunk at midnight over the key to my apartment, he called police, spent the night in jail, news somehow reached press & radio, forced to resign. Two months of intense self-analysis-dream-interpretation etc. Remarried. My chairman told me I had called up a student drunk at midnight & threatened to kill her. Wife left me bec. of drinking. Gave a public lecture drunk. Drunk in Calcutta, wandered streets lost all night, unable to remember my address. Married present wife 8 yrs ago. Many barbiturates & tranquilizers off & on over last 10 yrs. Many hospitalizations. Many alibis for drinking, lying abt. it. Severe memory-loss, memory distortions. DT's once in Abbott, lasted hours. Quart of whisky a day for months in Dublin working hard on a long poem. Dry 4 months 2 years ago. Wife hiding bottles, myself hiding bottles. Wet bed drunk in London hotel, manager furious, had to pay for new mattress, $100. Lectured too weak to stand, had to sit. Lectured badly prepared. Too ill to give an examination, colleague gave it. Too ill to lecture one day. Literary work stalled for months. Quart of whiskey a day for months. Wife desperate, threatened to leave unless I stopped. Two doctors drove me to Hazelden last November, 1 week intensive care unit, 5 wks treatment. AA 3 times, bored, made no friends. First drink at Newlbars' party. Two months' light drinking, hard biographical work. Suddenly began new poems 9 weeks ago, heavier & heavier drinking more & more, up to a quart a day. Defecated uncontrollably in a University corridor, got home unnoticed. Book finished in outburst of five weeks, most intense work in my whole life exc. maybe first two months of 1953. My wife said St. Mary's or else. Came here.

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Worst temptations to drinking:

parties, poetry-readings—refuse both for a year—& verse-writing: problem won't come up for 18 months or 2 years.

Replacements for drinking:

work on my Shakespeare biography mornings & afternoons—I drink v. little when doing scholarly work or writing prose: 2 or 3 drinks a day. Evenings: reading or music or conversation. Need more social life, tho' not parties.

Absolutely certain my wife will leave me if I start drinking again; afraid I might then kill myself.

Absolutely certain any more drinking will mean insanity or suicide, perh. quite soon, 2 or 3 years.

Hopes for sobriety: a reformed marriage, trust in Jim, reliance on God: outpatient treatment, AA.

Berryman felt that his exposition was sincere; everyone who heard was very moved. What his immediate audience did not discern, however, was that the schematic qualities and clarity of the declaration veiled a fundamental delusion. The piece may have been authentic, but it was almost wholly insincere, a fault masked by its coherence. Berryman was working on the level not of feelings, but of ideas. The statement that he recited was a confession of past events dissociated from his present sensibility. A delusion persists, for example, in his determination to write more prose because he drank less—"2 or 3 drinks a day"—while doing so, when it was absolutely essential for a recovering alcoholic never to drink *at all.* (Similarly, his efforts to pinpoint the causes of his alcoholism were scarcely relevant to the present course of treatment.)

During the last week of treatment, Berryman retrenched firmly. For one reason or another, he was not prepared or perhaps enabled to cauterize his disease, but only to suck the wound. On June 8th, Jim Zosel noted, "P(atien)t not coming on straight with anger & hostility. Will transfer to another group a few days." Accordingly, another counselor tried Berryman in her group—without success: "Saw him as hostile, deluded and regrouped."

Berryman was discharged from hospital on June 12th. "P(atien)t to be released today," Jim Zosel wrote. "Plan to have p(atien)t return for group for at least 2 wks. Physical health is not such that it may

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make sobriety difficult. Needs exercise & rest. P(atien)t seems to break out into the open & then regroup into hostile, arrogant & defiant behaviour. Some progress in treatment." Kate was reported "to be accepting of program & very cooperative."

Although Dr. Erickson wrote that "John Berryman seemed to really do quite well on the intensive alcohol therapy unit," and that "he was consequently discharged to go home on June 12th, taking no drug of any kind," those more closely observant of Berryman's attitude must have been aware that an impasse had been reached. Too often he would project a mask made up ambivalently of arrogance and pity, aggressiveness and pathos. For a while Berryman was angry and disappointed with his counsellor because of his sense of failure. Months later he came to respect and love Zosel.

Berryman felt that he had made a spiritual gain: "My relation with Him is quite strong at present." Physically he was in poor shape: "(I lost 19 lbs for one minor thing & still can hardly sleep—3 hrs. a night): so I don't know. I eat, & walk, & pray, & that's about all." Within a week of his discharge from the hospital, he confessed (June 18th or 19th), "I had a 'slip' yesterday afternoon: I went to a bar in St. Paul & drank for ¾ of an hour. Christ!" It became hideously clear to him that all his previous efforts to recover from alcoholism were no more than Band-Aids on a corpse. At least he was now alive to the possibilities of recovery held by St. Mary's Hospital, and by AA, even if his day was not yet.

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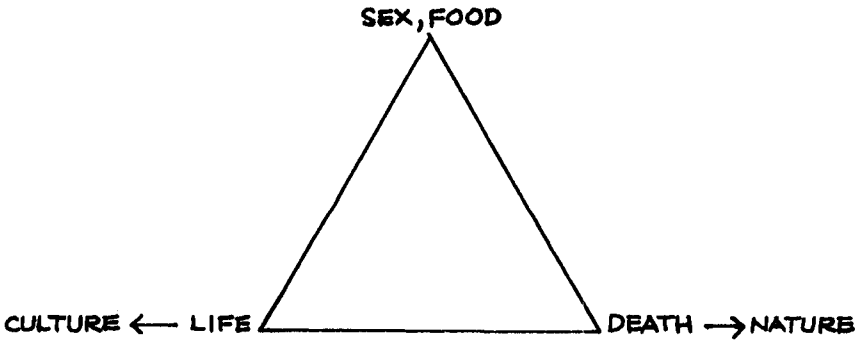
Jan Kott

THE SEXUAL TRIANGLE

On the model of Lévi-Strauss's well-known "culinary triangle" one could conceive of a primal triangle with Life on the side of Culture, Death on the side of Nature, and whose apex corresponds to Sex and Food, the two mediators between life and death.



This primordial triangle is the homologue of the sexual triangle whose vertices correspond to Mouth, Genitals, Anus, defining a semantic system of relations and oppositions (exchanges, symbolic identifications, correlations and inversions) between bodily functions and their linguistic and mythic designations. Corresponding to the fundamental opposition Mouth/Anus are the consecutive analogues of the oppositions voice/noise, breathing/farting, and eating/excreting. "To excrete" is parallel with "to vomit" and is the inverse of "to eat." Corresponding to the opposition Mouth/Anus is the second fundamental opposition—between nourishment and excrement.

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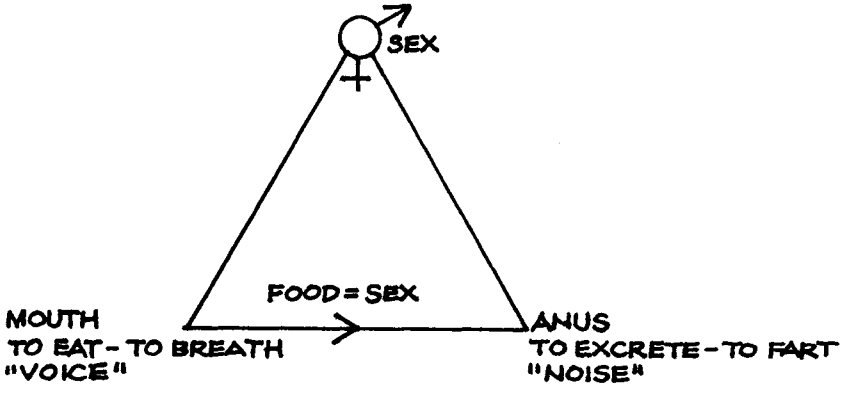
In this classification system the idealization of the mouth corresponds to the abasement of the anus: the "hole" is related to the cloaca (meaning both a sewer, a receptacle for filth, and in its zoological use, referring to the common orifice of the urinary, eliminatory and genital systems in vertebrate embryos), to filth and, in the semantics of myths, to the "gates of Hell." According to this system "to spit," the inverse of "to drink," would be the consecutive of "to shit." "Eat shit" is consecutive and parallel, at the symbolic level, to "Go to hell!" The verb of exchange between Mouth and Anus is always, significantly, "to eat" with its parallels and inversions. The exchange of food against excrement both unites and puts in opposition all the signs of Mouth and Anus (*la bouche d'égout*) and becomes the paradigm generating all the permutations of "to eat" in social relations (e.g. in dirty jokes) and in myths.



At a stage of infantile erotism sexual curiosity is oriented towards the anus and nourishment symbolically identified with sex (food=sex). With sexual maturity the two terms of this linguistic and symbolic equation are reversed (sex=food). In the linguistic system of English the verb of transition between Mouth and Genitals is again "to eat" with its parallel "to suck." In the system of French the sign of the exchange between *"la Bouche"* and *"le Sexe"* is *"baiser"* (to kiss/to copulate). This anatomical identification is found already in Latin with "labia." The fear of castration is often symbolized by the devouring mouth of the "vagina dentata." Sexual "nourishment" is signified by *"la chair"* (flesh, meat) and most markedly by "la consommation du marriage."

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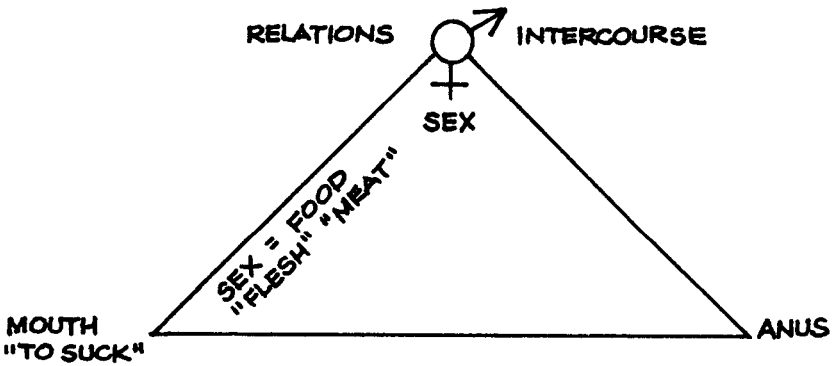
In English sexual "nourishment" is symbolized by "meat" (e.g. "meat market"). Another symbolic identification is manifested in the use of "head" for the male (and even female) genitals. In Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* this exchange is decisive for the structure of the work:

> *Provost:* Can you cut off a man's head?
> *Pompey:* If the man be a bachelor, sir, I can: but if he be a married man, he's his wife's head, and I can never cut off a woman's head.
> (IV.ii.1-4)

In the system of physiological language of the Trobrianders the eyes, as Malinowski noted, are the seat of sexual desire: *magila kayta,* literally the "eyeball," is the summit of the entire system.



The expressions for coitus at the vertex of Sex have a characteristic signification: "intercourse" (*le rapport*), consort (*le commerce*), etc. Equivalently, coitus can be signified within the paradigms of spacial models as "flying," "climax" (*le comble*), "coming" (*jouir*). In the advertisement for an American airline a stewardess invites passengers to "Fly me!", with its blatant sexual connotations.

In the English of the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries one could use in place of "coming" another verb "dying" (*mourir*). In Shakespeare and in the poems of Donne "dying" was used as well as "coming." In classical French there is the same exchange between the vertices of the Genitals and of the Anus in the symbolic connection of *"la petite mort"* (orgasm) and *"la mort"* (death).

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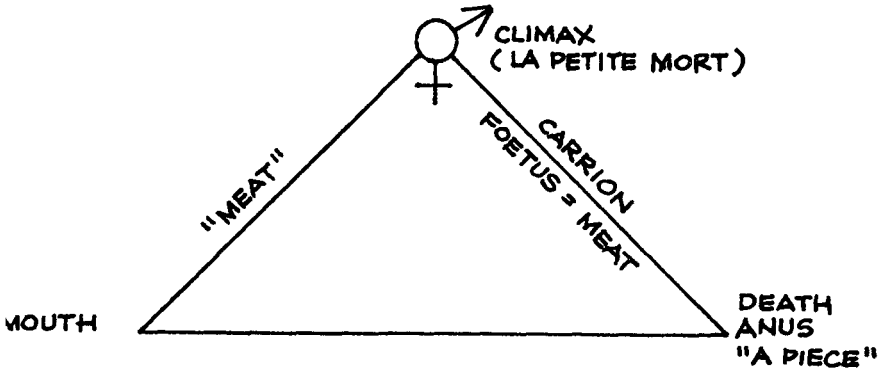
In nineteenth-century English, in the age of Victorian repression, the place of "coming" was filled by the term "spending," with the sexual discharge equated with money, (e.g., the expression "to spend a penny"). And in most semiotic systems "spending" is consecutive to and parallel with "excreting." The descent from Genitals to Anus in the sexual triangle is heavily stigmatized: it is the way of renunciation and repression. It is also the locus of taboos.

The vertex of the Anus, on the side of Nature, is the paradigm of Death, of Dirt, of Hell. The Hole is at the same time animal and monster.



The sign of exchange between the vertices of the Genitals and the Anus is again *"baiser"* ("baise mon cul") or *"foutre"* in its two senses: *"fous-moi le cul"* (fuck my ass) and *"je suis foutu"* (I'm fucked up). Through the identification of the female with the ass the semiotic system reflects male domination: a "good piece of ass" is finally just a "good piece."

"Meat" also signifies the corpse in Shakespeare—flesh is transformed into carrion. This symbolism of food is repeated again in the parallelism of the signifier through which foetus = meat. In mythic semantics menstruation and childbirth are often represented by vomiting, the inverse and correlative of both eating and excreting.

The sexual triangle delimits a semantic field, but from the *outside*, on the surface of the enunciation, in the semantics of concrete, visible, social signs. But in the interior of this triangle, at the profound existential level, one can construct another triangle whose vertices would be "I," "You/the Other," and the depersonalized third person "It." (Ça)

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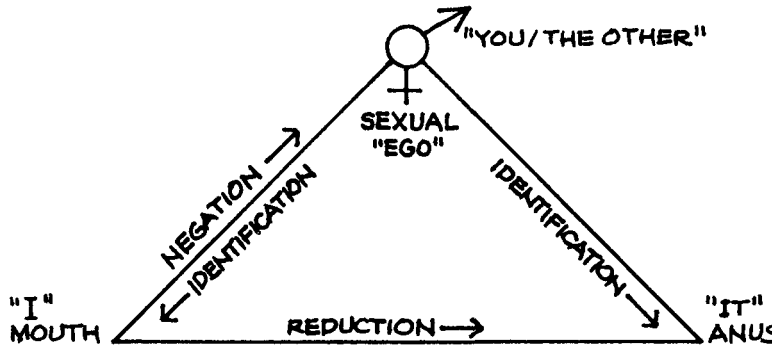

"I"-Mouth receives its sexual denomination in its relation with "You/the Other"; "You/the Other" for "I"-Mouth is the Genitals—either penis or vagina. On the other hand "It" is not neuter—it is always bisexual.

The Other for "I"-Mouth is also one's own sex, one's own genitals. At the level of linguistic signs the penis is often called by the proper name of its possessor, e.g., "Peter" (*le petit Pierre*), and similarly the vagina called e.g., *la petite Sophie*. In Polish the popular diminutives of female names are often employed in place of the generic name of the vagina (Zoska, Marysia).

At the profound level, at the level, if you will, of the Unconscious, there are two fundamental and contradictory relations between Mouth and Genitals, between "I" and "You/the Other," symbolic identity and symbolic negation:

Relations of symbolic identity

a. identity of "I"-Mouth with one's own genitals.
b. transfigured identity (displacement) of "I"-Mouth metamorphosed into the opposite sign: "I"-a male with vagina; "I"-a female with penis.
c. identity of "You/the Other" with one's own genitals.
d. symbolic identity of "You/the Other" with the opposite sex.

(The system of the French language seems exceptional in giving the masculine gender to "vagina" (*le vagin*) and the feminine gender to most of the names for the male genitals. Thus the paradox of calling a man "*Tu es con*" is really symptomatic.)

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Relations of symbolic negation
a. utter negation of its sexual Other by "I"-Mouth.
b. complete negation of the sex of "You/the Other" by "I"-Mouth.

In certain works of Freud (*On the Mechanism of Paranoia*, 1911; *Repression*, 1915; *The Loss of Reality in Neuroses and Psychoses*, 1925) "viscissitudes and deviations" are often analyzed—one could say in anticipation of structuralism—as permutations of signs in a symbolic algebra. Inversion is, already in 1915 (long before Merleau-Ponty), shown by Freud to be the displacement of the Look and of the Object of the Look:

a) The subject regards his/her own sex	=	The subject's sex beneath the gaze of the subject
b) The subject regards as alien object		c) The subjects sex as beneath the gaze of the Other
(voyeurism)		(exhibitionism)

In our triangular schema exhibitionism is the sex of "Me-as-Other" which looks at/articulates the Mouth. In voyeurism it is the sex of "You/the Other" which looks at/articulates the "I"-Mouth. As in Freud the projections of the libido can be presented as transformations of discourse (cf. Freud's presentation of the transformations of the basic homosexual wish underlying paranoia—"I (a man) *love him*"—in *On the Mechanism of Paranoia*). Delirium, then, is the profound displacement of the three vertices of our sexual triangle, with the reversal of its relations.

Repression, or existential denial, is the symbolic identification of the vertex of "You/the Other" with that of the "It." The Anus isn't marked for sex. "You" (masculine or feminine) reduced to the Hole, to "It," is degraded and depersonalized. Among the Trobrianders the most serious insult is "*ikaye pwala*," literally, "he screws shit" (Malinowski). The reduction of "I"-Mouth to the Anus is at the same time correlative and opposed to the reduction of "You/the Other" to the Hole. According to Freud the first identification reflects masochistic tendencies, the second, sadistic tendencies.

The deep structure of the sexual triangle doesn't translate itself directly through linguistic signs but nevertheless the signs are encoded there. The operational value of the triangle is in grasping of relations and permutations, but it is not merely a diagram. I believe one can use

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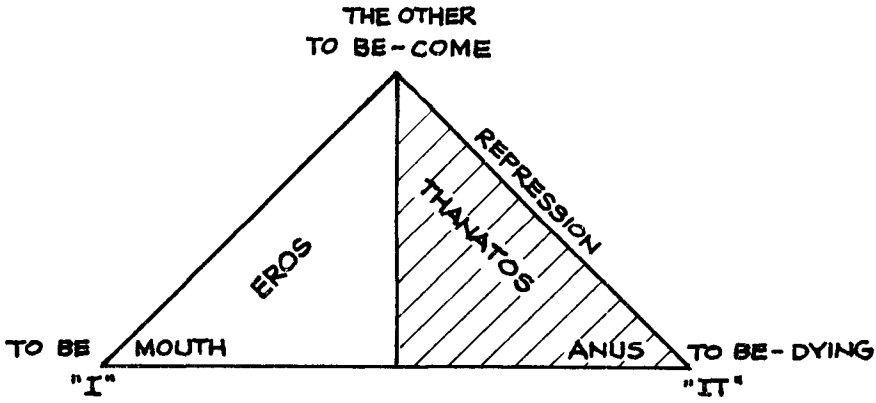
it for the classification of signs for example in rites of passage, where "I"-Mouth must identify itself, through symbolic signs, with its own genitals and with the sex of the Other in becoming aware of the "It": the Hole and Death. I believe also that the juxtaposition of the linguistic surface and of symbolic activity can define and direct the decoding of clinical and poetic delirium.

If we divide the triangles, primordial, sexual, and existential, by a vertical axis dividing the apex of Sex/the Other, the fields of Eros and Thanatos emerge—the first oriented towards the side of culture, the second towards the side of nature. The zone of taboo and sexual repression also emerge. The triangles indicate, then, a semiotic universe of existence in its corporeal limits. In the last analysis the vertices represent "to be," "to be-come," "to be-dying" (*etre, etre-jouir, etre-mourir*).



translated from the
French by Mark Rosenzweig

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Atanas Slavov

"THE THAW" AND THE FATE OF BULGARIAN DISSENT

The death of Stalin in the 1950s marked a turning point in Bulgaria, heralding a process of democratization which had a significant effect on literary life. Until then, life had been a matter of black and white extremes. The radicals of varied hues who had made up the literary community during World War II had split apart after Stalin's suppression of the attempt by Kostov and Dimitrov to achieve communist self-rule. Those intellectuals who worked for State institutions (the radio or the official Party press) were hastened to high posts in the Writers', Artists' and Composers' Unions, while the rest passed through the Labor Camps, and upon returning, were doomed to suffer as the underdogs of the home intelligentsia forever. But then in the mid-fifties literary cafes began coming back to life, and here they were, Party poets (like Valeri Petrov) and underdogs (like Vlado Svintilla) side by side once again around sidewalk tables where they sat with boisterous newcomers from radicalized Soviet Universities—like Djagarov—all of them dreaming of bringing back the shades of life to the faded tapestry of Bulgarian Culture.

I belonged to a group of home-educated newcomers. Some of us (like Tzvetan Stoyanov and myself) had been active for a couple of years before "The Thaw" in attempting to rebuild the shattered bridges with the West by introducing new authors in translation and new ideas in literary criticism. Others (like Levchev and Vassil Popov) were striving to reintroduce human values in their poetry and fiction. We were perfectly aware that perfecting a literature read by only a handful of people might be doing no more than creating a tempest in a teapot. But then we believed that just as a small cup may reflect the whole sky, so too we could make it clear that our position reflected the whole process of antidogmatism that was gathering speed in Eastern Europe.

* * *

Khruschev's denunciation of Stalin at the twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the April Plenum of the BCP, which established the new

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line calling for "the restoration of Lenin's principles," accelerated the process of democratization to a level we never expected. Stalin's victims were out of jail, homewritten manuscripts and information from abroad started circulating through Samizdat channels, new literary weeklies went out of control in the printing of young radicals and old dissident writers. The epigrams of Radoy Ralin, one of the wartime radicals, hit the streets of Sofia like machine gun fire, leading scores of young poets to devote their efforts to satire.

In a miraculous way the political "thaw" brought in a rich literary crop: critics like Minko Nikolov evaluated domestic literary productions according to the standards of world literature—standards with which he was both conversant and comfortable. And the emergence of surrealistic novelists like Radichkov and achingly sharp imagistic poets like Konstantin Pavlov was really more than anyone could have expected. Even less talented short story writers like N. Haytov brought something new of their own to our literary life: his melodramatic speculations about fate and tragedy in everyday country life struck the longing, sincerity-seeking, broad public in such a way that for a while it looked as though the old lost contact between the mass reader and contemporary Bulgarian literature was on its way to being restored.

But it was Kosta Pavlov who produced the best work in the Bulgarian dissident literature of that time. He was able to express the difficulties we were facing with such extraordinary lucidity that his readers could not fail to be engaged. His very first free-verse poem, "Flotation," opened our eyes to the dangers lurking in the destruction of human identity long before we were wise enough even to think about what our identity was. Only a few years later, he was with Levchev and Tzanev reading his poetry before crowds of students in the street. Then in Universities. Then in Workers' clubs.

For some time the fight for democratization continued on quite a large scale. While the newcomers read in the streets, the official Writers' Union cleared the way for old, established bourgeois writers coming straight out of jail or simply out of oblivion. Yet in 1960 (when most of us celebrated our thirtieth birthday) we called the coming decade "the either/or decade." We were aware that the freedom we were experiencing then wouldn't last forever, so we engaged in feverish discussions of tactics—in the cafés as well as in the literary press. We were trying to find a way to go as far as possible, so as to leave at least some "gained ground" behind us after the inevitable retreat began.

* * *

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Some of us were overoptimistic about the influence "The Thaw" would have upon the whole thrust of Bulgarian Culture. Others like Kosta Pavlov were, it seemed, overpessimistic, for they couldn't see lasting support coming from any stratum of that society. It was Pavlov who turned out to be right, but the situation at that time seemed to favor our line of argument. Newspapers like *Literaturni Novini* and magazines like *Mladezh* were publishing criticism of high officials, political poems dedicated to the memory of one of Stalin's victims, to Kostov, experimental poetry—anything! Reading unpublished poetry in the streets was just the beginning. Soon literary clubs started publishing without the permission of the authorities. In December 1962 a group of students boarded the train which carried me and a number of other young writers to Moscow. They distributed by hand among the passengers an unauthorized collection of poetry prefaced by a manifesto proclaiming "how nice it is to be angry" with our society. "We are poisoned with optimism," declared one of the poets represented. And the fans for poetry of that kind seemed rather wild and out of control. When Writers' Union officials ordered the cancellation of a reading by Pavlov and Levchev at the Performing Arts School, the students rioted.

I wrote several articles and tried to convince Kosta of the need for a tighter connection between poets and audience. I was convinced at the time that the technical and most of the humanistic intelligentsia were with us, so that there was no need to reproach them for their moral faults and spiritual shortcomings at the public readings which they attended with such enthusiasm. Kosta was opposed to this view. He was afraid to lower his moral standards, and he was right again, for that was the only source of his strength. My God, we were just a tiny, lonely bunch of people, in a tiny and lonely country, and our tactics were just a mess. First we allied ourselves with the Soviet Union because Khrushchev was attacking Stalinism and helping our fight against the conservatives at home, then we were against the USSR, for it was our long term suppressor; now we would support nationalistic feelings to help us against Soviet imperialism; then we would take a position against the brutal ideological ultra-conservatism which seemed to be associated with such feelings; now we would express our support for the avant-garde in art, for it was opposed to dogmatism; then we would find ourselves at odds with the snobbish shifting of fashion that went along with it and threatened to wipe away any esthetic standard we were trying to defend against that very same political dogmatism!

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Kosta dedicated his "Second Capriccio" to our argument. His vision went to the heart of our situation: he saw us as bats dreaming of the dawn while they cross paths in the darkness, giving voice to screams beyond the hearing range of human beings. That is how it was.

And then suddenly the whole thing went to pieces. On April 15, 1963—seven years after he was brought to the political stage by "the Thaw"—the Secretary General of the BCP, T. Zhivkov, delivered his speech against it. The speech was published under the title "Communist Ideology—the Highest Principle of our Literature and Arts," and the first example of "rottenness" cited in it was a poem of mine that the *Literaturni Novini* had published two years earlier. Publication of *Literaturni Novini* was stopped. The entire editorial staff of *Mladezh* was sacked. And that was that.

* * *

After being taken to task, everyone cited in Zhikhov's speech was instructed as to his positive aspects: i.e., he was shown what path he should follow if he wanted peace and the good life. Vassil Popov, for instance, was a very diligent fellow, the Secretary General said: he studied foreign languages, against which the Party had nothing. At the time all this seemed ridiculous, and we laughed at it; but soon enough it was developed into a new tactic which finished us.

Vlado Svintilla was the first to sense the danger, and he articulated it in the popular literary café called "The Bamboo" the day after the speech was published. "Socialist culture," he said, "is built by shifting everyone to a field about which he knows nothing, and cares less!" I have that sermon of his recorded in my literary diaries: "N. Bukov," he told us, "has already put aside his oil painting and started writing poetry. And Vassil Popov is going into linguistics!" "And you, Vlado?" someone asked. "I am starting to write on the history of the arts, let us say." "Why?" "Because I don't understand any of it, and don't care about it, and I shall not suffer from any imbecility that might befall the Fine Arts, or any harm that might even be inflicted on them by my own writings. I know and care for literature, but I won't be there to suffer anymore, no matter what happens to it."

Over the past ten years or so this idea of shifting people from one area to another has developed into a refined mechanism for the manipulation of dissenters among the Bulgarian humanistic intelligentsia. In addition, it enables officials to avoid creating martyrs, which might happen in the case of the open suppression of ideas. The

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officials control the money and the press, and they are able to arrange things so that the slamming of a door in someone's face is always accompanied by the opening of another one through which the victim may discharge whatever creative energy he still has left. And, of course, once you've given up your distinctive creative identity you become a passive "good conductor" for their manipulations: just another copper wire in the State machine.

Svintilla didn't hesitate to act in accordance with his own prediction. From being a first-class translator, literary critic, and essayist, he became a second-rate art critic. In this way he would not be able to make compromises, and would be able to earn his money in a field which he doesn't really care how the officials manipulate. He's all through now. A year ago he gave evidence against his friend, the literary historian Lazar Tzvetkov, who was accused of counter-revolutionary activity because of the illegal circulation of manuscripts by Solzhenitsyn and other dissidents.

Vassil Popov didn't exactly "go into linguistics," he stuck to his job as an editor of foreign language short stories in official weeklies and finally achieved the honor of being included as a juror for some Cuban Latin-American Literature award precisely in his capacity as a Bulgarian foreign language speaking celebrity.

A great majority of these people do not regard their present activities as representing some kind of moral degradation. They are not even aware of the fact that they have lost their creative identity, for the officially manipulated critiques, and the national prizes and awards keep assuring them they are doing quite well. Even those of the former "Bamboo" café heroes who traded their antidogmatism for high state and party posts, like the poets Djagarov (now the vice-president of the State Council) and the brilliant Levchev (now the vice-president of the Fatherland Front mass organization), probably still believe that deep down, in spite of the rotten political manipulations which they are conducting through their offices, they are the old, honest radicals of the sixties. Levchev at least openly stated just that in a poem which he published this past spring.

* * *

So the "either/or" decade ended by turning "Thaw Period" dissenters into copper wire for the State machine. But not all of them, of course. Some of us desperately sought new forms in which to preserve ourselves. Desperately! I'll give just one example. A group of young poets argued, in front of Writers' Union officials in favor of the

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restoration of the political state censorship of Tzarist times. In this case it would be Marxist censorship, they maintained; and if the censors couldn't find anything counter-revolutionary in the particular work under scrutiny, they could simply stamp it acceptable. It was thought that that would guarantee young writers at least some creative freedom within the framework of Marxist ideology. This didn't work out, of course, for what was involved was not only the ideological control of literature and arts which we had already, but a blind bureaucratically manipulated merry-go-round, which didn't really concern the Party and State bosses who were busy playing high level political checkers.

As for the rest of dissenters of the "either/or decade" who didn't give up: Tzvetan Stoyanov died from a ruptured appendix during the last year of the decade at the age of forty; the poet Penev, after three futile attempts, finally succeeded in committing suicide with an overdose of sedatives; after two attempts, the critic M. Nikolov committed suicide by slashing his wrists. He finally succeeded by soaking them in a tub of hot water first. The graphic designer Dimo Popov killed himself by putting a bullet through his head, and for some time, the poet Fotev was a drug addict. So much for my generation. Among the radicals of World War II the poet Alexander Gerov went through a long period in a mental asylum. The poet and playwright Peichev was destroyed by alcoholism. Deep in his hypochondria the satirist Ralin now jumps over tram lines "in order to avoid electrocution." I could go on with such a list for as long as you'd like, but I'd better stop.

In my case, the closing of the field of creative literature was accompanied by an opening of the field of science. Actually, my shift to the theory of literature was an easy and natural one, so I didn't realize at first what was happening to me. I continued to work in that area as honestly as I could, but then it started up again, for I obviously remained the same old "neutral conductor" who showed no sign of turning into the "copper wire" which the state machine required. So they closed the door to active research, opening at the same time before me the great arch of scientific bureaucracy, under which the eggs of all the monsters devouring Bulgarian culture are hatched. I was appointed the organizer of a huge research project on the future of World Culture. The Academy of Sciences was supposed to submit a report to the State Council in order to aid it in its efforts to formulate a forthcoming decree on the boundaries within which Bulgarian culture should develop. This project hindered me from completing my doctoral dissertation for three years, but it also landed me in an exchange program with the United States.

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I was to read a paper at the Congress of the International Association for Comparative Literature, but I was not allowed to attend the event. Academic officials said they were planning to send me instead to Black Africa to lecture on esthetics. I am sure that many of the people who made the decisions about my life at that time believed that I would be happier travelling for fun to the United States and Tanzania rather than straining my eyes over my manuscripts. The problem is that showing vulnerability to bureaucratic manipulations is tantamount to defecting from the fight for the democratization of Bulgarian literature. So I decided that I had to resist defeatism, committing what might seem to be, at least in the eyes of some of my old friends, a moral suicide.

The most tragic figure in this line, though, is Kosta Pavlov. This man is so good as a poet that for years and years he has been treated as an extremely dangerous rebel—which he is not, although he can't help being a better poet than the official ones. He has never quarrelled with officials. "It is they who are harassing me," he says. When the turning of the screw first began making itself felt, he wrote a poem, "Singing Contest," which sounded like a swan song. He was bitter, and as he read the poem to friends in his attic, you could sense his blocked emotions stirring like "a squirrel rolling a pine cone in his throat. Down and up. Up and down." But he didn't grumble about what was happening. He had never expected more. "If it is not my turn yet, let him step forward whose turn it is now, and start singing."

Then he bought a puppy and took it with him to a small hut near Sofia to watch it grow as the years passed by. He had been invited to work in films and as an editor in publishing houses, but he has stuck to his poetry even though that has meant that he has had to cut his pennies in half for more than fifteen years. The trap prepared for him was script writing—a job he had done from time to time to earn a living. But he wouldn't do it, and last year the bureaucratic computer finally decided to overturn the horn of plenty on him. An old rejected script of his was filmed, and the Secretary General of the BCP, Zhivkov himself, announced at a private performance that this was "a great piece of art, dedicated to our heroic past." Which it was not, of course. And Pavlov knows it. Yet he is being gilded as a result. Some eight other scripts of his which had been collecting dust for years are being filmed. He has money now, and so present day Bulgarian literature has lost its only martyr. The official critics are belching with excitement about his successful abandonment of poetry for script writing. No one pays any attention to what Pavlov insists on in his interviews: "I've written scripts for money. I am a poet, and I am not planning to give up writing poetry."

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So he is still trying to kick. But there is no one to help him.

* * *

But not everything is calm. Some time ago, Valeri Petrov, Professor Gocho Gochev, the script writer Christo Ganev (all of them World War II radicals), and the young poet Blagoy Dimitrov were dismissed from the Party for not signing a letter denouncing Solzhenitsyn's writings—a letter imposed on the Writer's Union by Djagarov, who was then its president. And last year the whole staff of *September* magazine was sacked as a consequence of the publication of material concerning the slave labor camps of the Stalin era into which Bulgarian political emigrés to the Soviet Union were thrown.

Things like that are happening all the time. But it seems to me that what we are perceiving here are the moral spasms of a strangled victim rather than the fighting back of a living political or social force.

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FOUR POEMS BY KONSTANTIN PAVLOV

FLOTATION

The rubber belt flapped by
almost touching me.
One piece jumped up onto
the assembly line,
proud of containing
too much zinc,
lots of lead
and an incredibly tiny amount of
golden dregs.

They're funny, those ore pieces.
They must have believed
the mill which enriches the ore
resembles a "salone de bouttes!"

I was frightened.
I hesitated a lot.
But I made up my mind
and jumped on the line!
After all, they're my brothers, those ore pieces!
I contain, as they do
too much zinc
lots of lead
and an incredibly tiny amount of golden dregs.

So long, craftsmen!

Sledges smote us.
Sifts sifted us.
Solutions softened our weensy souls.
It was horrible
and it hurt.
But now we are pure:
all zinc!
all lead!
There are no golden dregs left in us any more!

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CAPRICCIO FOR GOYA

Gone is the old horror once and for all:
the wholesome beastliness,
the eternal beastliness,
without grimaces and grins.

Horror changes his character: friendly,
he taps me on the shoulder,
woos me condescendingly
and plays with the image he has constructed for himself.
("You and I, we are equally strong;
only you are a little more beautiful. . .")

And smiles.

Ah, it's the smile that makes him so sickening;
it makes him a pervert,
it makes him a lunatic.

And I feel a new kind of vomit choking me,
as if I'd been French-kissed
by babies with beards and moustaches.

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SECOND CAPRICCIO FOR GOYA

I'm tired of working the night shift.
The dark makes me superstitious.
It might be a friend approaching;
It might be a foe.
I evade them equally!
We cross paths with the precision of bats.

I have become uncertain and suspicious.
Only by the hunch of instinct
can I tell who's smiling in the darkness,
and who's frowning.

I wish I could meet the sunrise fresh.
Maybe I'd blink at first.
But I'd get accustomed.
Some sort of bird sings at dawn, I hear;
a nightingale, or whatever they call it.
Folks say it's pleasant!

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SINGING CONTEST

The theme: cat.
The feeling: gentleness.
(Do you really believe
I can't be gentle?)

My cat.
White.
Blue in her whiteness.
Blue-white to the tip of her tail.
A small devil in white uniform.
Grace full of criminal intentions.
Purring electricity.

Stop.
Let the theme be the same,
but the feeling be: gallantry.

(Listen to the bugle call)
My cat defies death on her cat's feet,
and draws back like a rat,
coos like a dove,
chirps like a sparrow.
But. . . .

. . . but the Bravos twins,
the Los Bravos's bastards (Los Bravos-the short armed one,*
they used to call him).
the two baby angels in shorts,
the two angels cruel and open-hearted.
the two mice revengers
strung up my cat.

Oh, the white cat,
the blue one in her whiteness,
the one blue-white to the tip of her tail.

---

*Stalin was referred to as "The short-armed one"

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Hold it!
That's a nice motif for a ballad.
(Do you really believe
I can't do a ballad?)

My cat defies death,
but is stretched out now as if she were dead.

But she only pretends to be dead.
Right in front of her nose sparrows perch and rats dance.
Yet my cat just stays like that.
She'll stay like that for a long time, but. . .

. . . but when the moonless night comes
(the time for killing and remorse)
the father goes out unbuttoned
(just as a custom and not of necessity)
in his wooden clogs and his cloth nightgown
into the yard
(alpenium, oleanders, box trees, a lake
in the alpenium: a machine gun, automatics (6) and a transmitter;
in the lake: a pair of swans, beer bottles (6) and a rubber crocodile)

my cat then. . .

Stop.

I just wanted to try my voice.
I just wanted to rehearse my mime.
I just wanted to be sure my fingers were good on the keys
of the typewriter.
(I'm fine.)

That's how in a singing competition on a theme
the cats become immortal,
equal to the holy cows,
and the ibis who is holy, too.
"Why do you sing of cats?"
(The question is asked by a dog.)

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Why?
Because.
Because my people love animals.
That's why!
Because there is a squirrel rolling a pine cone in my throat.
Down and up.
Up and down.
That's why!

But
because it is not my turn yet,
let him step forward whose turn it is,
and start singing.

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Richard Schlatter

ON BEING A COMMUNIST AT HARVARD

In the faculty lunch room at Rutgers University recently, I was asked by a young colleague how it was that I could have been a Stalinist at Harvard. I was startled by the question: no one had ever called me a Stalinist before nor had I ever thought of myself as one. Nor did I ever know of any Trotskyists or Trotskyites or Burnhamites or Lovestoneites at Harvard. Harvard was very remote from New York City. At Harvard in the thirties I had simply been a member of the Communist Party. But that began, not at Harvard, but at Oxford.

I came to Harvard in 1930, the only child of sensible, lower-middle class, Republican, small-town, upwardly-mobile parents. In school I caught a glimpse of the world of ideas, books, the arts and high culture. I was the best student in my high school, and college seemed the road to freedom.

I was already something of a grass roots radical. I had taken Presbyterian Sunday School seriously, read the New Testament fervently and became, vaguely, a Christian socialist. Then I lost my Christian faith but remained a kind of socialist. I was encouraged by a high school teacher who was a socialist and a pacifist. I read G.B. Shaw, *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism*, and I subscribed to the *New Republic*. I believed, in a loose sort of way, in progress, in equality—racial, economic, social, political—and I thought wars had come to an end.

But I forgot most of this when I arrived at Harvard in 1930. I was overwhelmed and wholly delighted with the intensely intellectual, luxurious, ivory tower world of Cambridge. Luxury: I had a bedroom, bath, and sitting room with fireplace and maid service in a grand House with library, common rooms, squash courts, and handsome dining room where excellent meals were served by uniformed waitresses three times a day. I had a full scholarship. I had only a vague impression that outside there was something called the Great Depression. My family were lucky enough to survive without any real hardship—they must have worried a lot but they never told me—and I had no personal experience whatsoever of poverty.

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I was an enraptured and determined consumer of Cambridge and Boston's music, theater, libraries, movies, and museums. Harvard College seemed to me to be the academic capital of the world—and in so far as the world had an academic capital, it was. I majored in History and Literature, and we thought ourselves to be the elite of the elite. My teachers were Perry Miller, F.O. Matthiessen, C.H. McIlwain, John Livingston Lowes, Bernard DeVoto, Kenneth Murdock, Theodore Spencer, Walter Houghton, and A.N. Whitehead. President Lowell came for coffee in the Lowell House Common Room and explained why it had been necessary to execute Sacco and Vanzetti, and a week later Felix Frankfurter came to tell us why Lowell was wrong. I knew Frankfurter was right but, mostly, I was impressed by being so near famous men. It was a heady and exciting world for a young man from Fostoria, Ohio. I became a good friend of Perry Miller and Matthiessen and Kenneth Murdock, and spent weekends with them in the country and many hours in Cambridge talking late into the night. The student circle to which I belonged included C.L. Barber, Harry Levin, Dan Boorstin, and Richard Goodwin, and our conversation was tireless and intense in the finest tradition of old-fashioned humanistic discourse, the best I have ever had in my life. I have never doubted that I had the finest general education that anyone could desire, and I knew it at the time.

As an undergraduate I had no time for politics and the world outside the academy. If there was any radical politics at Harvard, I did not know it. I was still a pacifist and a naive kind of socialist, and I thought the world was progressing in the direction of freedom, democracy, equality, peace and the end of superstition (i.e., religion). I thought the League of Nations was a good thing and had no doubt that Gandhi would force the British to quit India. But my deepest concerns were personal, not political. What I wanted was to become a professor, preferably at Harvard, since I had scarcely heard of any other University. I thought that professors were better than other people! They were urbane, cosmopolitan (they went to Europe), and disinterested (or so I thought) intellectuals. Comfortably insulated from the turmoil of the real world, we, their students, devoted ourselves, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, to the "disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." It was old-fashioned, but for me it was new, awesome, and delightful.

If contemporary politics did not concern me much as an undergraduate at Harvard, I did get some introduction to political thinking. My two most interesting academic exercises were lengthy studies of

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Thucydides and Hobbes. Years later I edited an edition of Hobbes's translation of Thucydides with an introductory essay examining the tough rigor with which they both cut through naive moralistic notions of the political process. Their recognition of the ironies of history—the difference between what the actors thought they were achieving and the actual outcome, the hypocrisies of politics but also the genuinely noble stances which unwittingly conceal a parochial self-interest—fascinated me. Perhaps this prepared me for Marxist interpretations of contemporary history when I came to them later. Marxist analysis seemed to combine the realism of Thucydides and Hobbes (and Machiavelli whom I read at Oxford) with a fervent moral commitment which was not delusory because it recognized the limits of historical possibility. Communist theory seemed to be the application to the present of the kind of touch-mindedness which a good historian must apply to the past. And the delight which I took in Hobbesian irony coupled with the incipient radicalism which I brought with me to Harvard, made me, perhaps, less credulous about the splendors of that place than I now recall. At least one friend from those days thinks I was much more critical of Harvard than I have remembered and suggests that I have adopted in this sketch a *faux naif* tone as a protective device.

I graduated in 1934, and Goodwin, Boorstin and I won Rhodes Scholarships and began a three year stay at Oxford—a marvellous continuation of the previous four years but now in the homeland of Anglo-American culture. Oxford, we decided, although exciting, was not quite up to Harvard. Luxurious living again—I had a bed room and sitting room in Merton—no bathroom, but a man brought me breakfast every morning and served elegant luncheon parties in my rooms on occasion. Again, I had famous lecturers and tutors: Collingwood, G.N. Clark, R.H. Tawney (a frequent visitor at Oxford), G.D.H. Cole. I had Clark and Tawney as my thesis advisors for the D. Phil. The Rhodes stipends were princely, and we had money to go to the Continent frequently. We all read books on art and visited museums, palaces, churches, and ancient towns. We spent a lot of time in Germany and heard a lot of Wagner and Mozart. It was a marvelous continuation of the life of Harvard, and these seven years from 1930–1937 glow now in my memory as a golden age. But Oxford added something; it was there that I became a Communist.

Goodwin and I spent the summer of 1934, before going to Oxford, bicycling in Germany. I knew nothing about Hitler and I did not learn much that summer, although I had an ardent and personable young Brown Shirt for a language tutor in Heidelberg. I knew hardly more

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about Mussolini or Stalin. My American friends and I spent pleasurable weeks in Italy during the Abyssinian War, which we thought was a bad thing, but not much concern of ours. We were reading Berenson and wondering whether all good painting had ended with Duccio and Cimabue.

About 1936, back in Oxford there came a sudden change, but I cannot now remember exactly how it happened. As a historian, I am a little puzzled at how difficult it is to recapture one's own past and a little sceptical at the ease with which others seem to think they can do it. Perhaps one of my troubles is that since I am a compulsive destroyer of personal papers, I have no letters or notes or diaries. This is what I remember.

Somehow, about 1936, at Oxford, I became acutely aware of the world of politics. I had always been some sort of socialist, and in reading history as an undergraduate I had absorbed some notions about capitalism, imperialism, war and class struggle. Then in 1936 some new Rhodes Scholars arrived who had been in radical student movements at home. Mostly it was a result of the rising concern in England and at Oxford with Mussolini, Hitler, the Japanese in Manchuria, and the prospect of another war. But it was especially the impact of the Spanish Civil War which touched us all so passionately. It was the era of the Popular Front, the Left Book Club, the International Brigade. At least one Rhodes Scholar became a courier to Spain for the Republican government.

In all this, the Russians, and the Communists, seemed to be on the right side. Not only had the Webbs and Harold Lasky blessed the Soviet regime and Lincoln Steffens said, "I have seen the future and it works," but also at the League of Nations Litvinow was trying to persuade the British and French to join the Russians in stopping fascism in Spain and in preventing a new world war. I do not remember ever discussing Trotsky or the Russian purges. Our primary goal was to prevent World War II, and we paid scant attention to Russian domestic policies. I can remember being a little troubled when the communists attacked the anarchists in Spain. But since I did not know much about anarchists, I accepted the notion that they were a Spanish aberration and that anarchists were impractical idealists who refused to accept the military discipline necessary to defeat Franco. The Popular Front was strong in France and seemed to be gathering strength in England. Communists seemed to be the most active members of the Front. There seemed to be hope that Hitler and Mussolini might be stopped in Spain and another World War averted.

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So I, and some other American students, joined the communist student organization at Oxford; it was called the October Club. The membership was supposed to be a secret. We did not do much. We talked and talked and talked, and it was good talk. We joined the Left Book Club and read some of the books. We went to London to see Paul Robeson in *Stevedore* and went backstage to talk with him after the performance. I once distributed some leaflets for the Labour-Popular Front parliamentary candidate in Oxford. John Strachey came with the leaders of the student group to breakfast in my rooms in Merton. I remember going to hear Maurice Dobb talk about China. All of this was important to me, and I took it seriously although not, I think, fanatically. I had lots of friends, English and American, who were not radicals at all. Phillip Toynbee, who was the head of the October Club, has written well about it and about the effect of the Spanish War on English students.

My main job in 1936–1937 was to write a doctoral thesis, and politics was never allowed to interfere with that. I wrote a book that was published by the Oxford University Press in 1940. And I continued to go to concerts and plays and to read novels and poetry and every good book I could find. I haunted Blackwell's and ran up a bill for books which took me years to pay off. I bicycled in England and travelled on the Continent and worked at French and German. I cannot remember much about meetings of the October Club, but I do remember hearing Richard Strauss conduct *Rosenkavalier* and doing the whole of the *Ring* in Munich, visiting Verona because T.S. Eliot said it had the finest Romanesque church in Europe, rowing (very badly) for Merton, reading More's *Utopia* with a Merton classics don in order to improve my Latin, attending Tawney's Ford Lectures and Collingwood's lectures on the *Idea of History*.

In Germany we did argue, mildly, with young Nazis in beerhalls and youth hostels. I made a trip to Trier to photograph the house where Marx was born and thought it a brave gesture because the Nazis had closed the house to visitors and stationed tough looking Storm Troopers outside. But mostly I enjoyed myself in Germany, where cheap money made living easy. It seems paradoxical that I found Italy and Germany pleasant places to visit in spite of the political horrors. When politics did engage my deepest feelings, as in the Spanish conflict, my attitude was different. Even in 1956 I still found it a traumatic experience to visit Spain. Since I had little interest in Russian culture or Russian internal politics, I never visited Russia in the thirties.

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In 1937 I came back to Harvard as a Tutor in History and Literature. Harvard had been politicized in the three years since I had left. The Harvard Teachers' Union had attracted some of the best people on the Faculty: Paul Sweezy, F.O. Matthiessen, Perry Miller, Harry Levin, David Owen among many others. I took an active part. Radicalism in the thirties was bound up with the union movement, and I was for a time a delegate from the Teachers' Union to the Boston Council of the A.F.L. The Union invited Harry Bridges for a triumphal visit to Harvard. Students also had a strong political union, and some of the leaders were among my tutees.

But I saw no communists anywhere and did not make any effort to find any. The Spanish War was drawing to a close, the Popular Front did not amount to much in America. In England I had wanted to see the British and the French intervene to stop the fascists, but in America I had always been an isolationist. My generation was convinced that America had made a terrible mistake in entering World War I, and I was wary of becoming entangled again. And interventionism hardly seemed practical politics in 1937.

The first communist I met at Harvard was Granville Hicks. He had been invited to come as a temporary lecturer on American culture. President Conant had made funds for a lectureship available, and Murdock, Matthiessen, Howard Mumford Jones, Perry Miller and a few others had selected Hicks as the most eminent American Marxist and communist intellectual. Hicks was assigned to Adams House, where I was a resident tutor. One day at lunch I mentioned to him my political activities at Oxford, and he told me he had formed a small Harvard Faculty communist group and asked me to come around. I and some of the people who had been at Oxford with me went along. Altogether we were a dozen or so—the names were front-page news some years later when the House Un-American Activities Committee was conducting its historical researches into subversion at Oxford and Harvard.

Again, in 1938–39 my major interests were not political. I was first of all a young academic learning to lecture, conducting tutorials, writing a book and some scholarly articles. The Harvard communist group talked a lot. Some of it was good talk. I remember one meeting when a hack party functionary came to lecture us on Lenin, whose works, he said, contained accurate predictions of future events. "So does the Book of Revelation" said Robert Gorham Davis, and that ended lectures by party functionaries.

The Harvard communist group did discuss the business of the

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Teachers' Union, and usually voted as a unit at Union meetings. The only really important vote which I remember—one which split the Union and eventually brought about its demise—was on the issue of supporting the reelection of Roosevelt and taking sides in the war in Europe. The Communist Party had abandoned the Popular Front and was opposed to Roosevelt and the war, and we went along, stupidly, as I think now. But the feeling was strong that the war at that time was not an antifascist war any more than the First World War had been a war "to make the world safe for democracy," and it fitted the traditional view of my generation that America's involvement in World War I had been a tragic mistake. Yet to abandon Britain, which I loved, and to stop opposing Hitlerism, which I hated, was a bitter experience. The fall of France was traumatic for me but I still clung, miserably and in violation of my deepest feelings, to the principle of neutrality. It was an enormous relief when Hitler attacked Russia. That attack may not have changed the nature of the war, but it seemed to me a sufficient reason to abandon my painful refusal to take sides.

Granville Hicks left the Communist Party with a big splash when the Russian pact with Hitler was signed in August, 1939. Some of the Harvard group drove over to his house in Grafton, N.Y. to talk it over and agreed that he was right and that we would probably follow suit. I lingered on for a few months, feeling more and more uncomfortable. But I was not convinced then, and am not now, that the Nazi-Soviet pact was wicked. The Western powers had made a pact with Hitler at Munich and were apparently hoping that Germany would attack Russia. Why should the Russians not try to turn the tables? But the intolerable part was the sudden switch in the propaganda of the Communist Party: from one day to the next Roosevelt and Churchill were transformed from the saviors of peace and civilization to devilish warmongers, and Hitler suddenly became the friend of peace. Pearl Harbor made us all glad to have the Russians as allies, but the Popular Front died. The Harvard communist group quietly faded away, as did the Teachers' Union, and my own political activity came to an end. I got married.

I have two regrets about the communist episode at Harvard. The first, a personal one, is that it involved secrecy and meant concealing an important part of my life from some of my best friends. F.O. Matthiessen knew that I was a Communist because he asked me and I told him. Perry Miller never asked, did not know, and was deeply offended years later when he found out by reading, in *The New York Times*, Boorstin's testimony before the House Un-American Activities Com-

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mittee. Secret political groups, about which some of one's best friends are kept in the dark, exact a heavy human cost.

My other regret about the communist episode in my life is more complex and more difficult for me to analyze. I know now, of course, that I belonged to an international organization which was responsible, in the thirties and later, for horrenduous crimes. The fact that I knew nothing of these crimes is a poor defence—the facts were there to be known. I am in the position of the young Nazi who, in the beginning at least, knew nothing of the murders and death camps, looked away from the lesser iniquities, and saw in Hitler the renewer of German culture, the avenger of the wrongs of Versailles, and the champion of western civilization against the barbarism of bolshevism.

How ought one to look back on such a past? Certainly with some sense of humility, of regret, and of the fallibility of political action, but beyond that I am not sure. I cannot say that I have been ravaged by feelings of guilt. I do, however, envy my radical contemporaries who had the good sense to remain politically independent.

The experience, in the fifties, of being subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee would not have encouraged me to join any other radical groups, had there been any to join. Three people had been fired from my university because they had refused to answer the questions of that Committee and I had decided that I could not give the Committee the names of my former associates. So I was faced with the possibility of losing my job and my career. But it was not just the question of losing my job—one can always, I thought, find a way to live. But the only way in which I could do anything I felt worth doing was by being a teacher, a scholar, an academic. The thought that all that might come to a sudden end had a dampening effect on my political activities. There was no support available within the university. The A.A.U.P. was powerless, and there was no organization on the outside which could help. This was not the case in England, but it was certainly true of American academic society in the fifties. My notions of the kind of world I would like to see have not changed much since 1940 (although my belief in its ever becoming real has faded a little), but after McCarthy I became cautious in revealing those notions.

Being a Communist at Oxford and Harvard did not, I think, matter much one way or another politically. We did little, and what we did had no impact on the practical world of affairs. But being politically active did have, indirectly, a very important and lasting effect. I and many of my contemporaries came to believe, with Matthiessen and Tawney, that the academy is lifeless and pedantic unless it

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remains in touch with the great moral issues of the outside world. For a little time in the thirties American universities were in touch, and they were transformed as institutions. The Harvard to which I returned from Oxford in 1937 was a very different and much more vital place than the Harvard which I had left in 1934. Scholarship and teaching had a new significance and the acquisition of knowledge was infused with meaning and purpose. This combining of thinking and acting did not affect all individuals equally—Perry Miller was never much of an activist—but it affected the whole institution and thus, indirectly, all its members. Everyone was aware of the question, "knowledge for what?"

We read Marx and Mannheim and other German sociologists and learned something about the sociology of knowledge. The historian's work rests on assumptions which are related, as radical or conservative, to his own age. The good scholar tries hard to uncover his own assumptions, to look at them critically. He does this by listening imaginatively and sympathetically to the voices of the past and by listening attentively to the voices of his colleagues who start with different assumptions. And in so doing he may, perhaps, be able to rise a little way above the limitations of his own age and society. We were doing that at Oxford and Harvard in the thirties, and we came close, I think, to establishing a proper relationship between scholarship and action, to creating an academic conscience. Two books, among many others, which came from Harvard in the thirties and forties are evidence of what was happening then: Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* and Schlesinger's *Age of Jackson* are both professional works of scholarship whose special interest is that they are committed to views of what American society should be and might become. The decline of political commitment in the forties and fifties led to the pedantry of "the end of ideology." Leo Marx and Carl Schorske have written eloquently on this decline, and I agree with them.

The question of the relation between teaching and political action was widely debated at Harvard in the thirties. In my own case, I think nothing has changed. I was taught at Harvard and Oxford that an historian's assumptions shape his views of the past. My own teaching and scholarship have been shaped by my assumptions about justice, equality, the nature of man and of society, and the causes of historical change. In teaching, I try to reveal these assumptions and to make clear that without the framework and the motivation which they provide I would see no point in studying history at all. This is not to propagandize and is not inconsistent with impartiality if it is combined with

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Four American students from England visiting Italy, Easter, 1936. From left, Donald N. Wheeler, Daniel J. Boorstin, C.L. Barber, Richard Schlatter.

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openness of mind and a willingness to explore all alternatives sympathetically: my assumptions, I assume, are not necessarily the assumptions of my students—nor should they be.

I remember Heywood Broun's story of how he became a radical. As an undergraduate at Harvard he took a course in the spring term given by the ultraconservative sociologist, Thomas Nixon Carver. The first half of the course was a presentation of radical social theories, and the second half was devoted to Carver's refutations of these theories. But the baseball season in Boston opened just as the refutations were beginning, Broun went to the games instead of the lectures, missed the refutations, and was a radical for the rest of his life. I have always taken this to be a tribute to the pedagogical honesty of Thomas Nixon Carver.

Both my monograph on the *Social Ideas of Religious Leaders, 1660–1685* (Oxford, 1940) and my book on *Private Property* (London and New Brunswick, N.J., 1951) show very clearly, both in the subjects chosen for study and in the way those subjects are analyzed, how much my own beliefs about the nature of man and society have guided my scholarship and how much those beliefs have been influenced by Marxist historical theory. Reviewers have noted this influence. I was flattered when Eugene Genovese referred to me as one of the best of American Marxist historians. But no reviewer has called my writings propaganda or has accused them of lacking rigor and impartiality. In fact, those reviewers who found merit in my books thought the method of interpretation the most interesting aspect, and that would not have been what it was except for my experience as a young Communist.

In the end, then, being a Communist and a radical was important and, I believe, fruitful for me as a teacher. The Harvard Communists I knew never lost some sense of critical detachment. In Cambridge we had, I suppose, some degree of nonchalance—it used to be called Harvard indifference—and none of the deadly seriousness of some Communists, a seriousness, it may be, taken from the Russians, for whom politics has always been a matter of life and death. Communism at Harvard seems to have been very different from communism at City College. So I find it difficult to comprehend what Dan Boorstin meant when he said to the House Un-American Activities Committee, "I think a member of the Communist Party should not be employed by a University." Speaking for myself, if Harvard should not have let me teach in 1938, then Rutgers should not let me teach now. My pedagogical style and my assumptions about the reasons for doing history have not changed much since I left the Communist Party.

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George Stade

MAILER AND MILLER

"Wear any uniform so long as it's not yours," advises Henry Miller, and the various uniforms of bum, stud, psychopomp, jeremiah, and saint he wears in his books never quite fit the forms and motions we see behind the garb and the gab. The protagonist of his books, name of Henry Miller, describes himself as being such-and-such, and this so-and-so varies from book to book, from passage to passage. But we do not see him as he sees himself. The figure we make out from passage to passage exposes only new lineaments of its eternal consistency. The "I" of his books does not know itself, and what it doesn't know remains pretty much the same. The shiftings of Proteus configure a Prometheus bound to his obsession but sure he is free.

So far, then, we have two Henry Millers, one a wardrobe of costumes, the other their inhabitant. A third Henry Miller is the designer of the costumes, the author holding onto the shirt-tails of his protagonist, the man whose hand we can shake or whom we can see condescended to in the *Diaries* of Anaïs Nin. Sometimes the author and the protagonist seem pretty close. "I have moved the typewriter into the next room where I can see myself in the mirror as I write," says the protagonist of *Tropic of Cancer*. From all the squirms and craning, we gather that the image lacks definition, Dracula eluding his own gaze into the pier-glass. Similarly, the author never sees through his reflections and so has to keep rewriting his single book under numerous titles, always one step behind a protagonist who keeps running in place, but in the very best form.

More often the author and protagonist are some distance apart. In an earlier appreciation of Miller, Norman Mailer wondered at "the gulf which forever exists between an artist's personality and his work—here particularly the violent, smashing fuck-you gusto of *Tropic of Cancer* and the strong, benign, kindly mood of the man today." The Henry Miller who wrote *Cancer*, more particularly, was fastidiously high-German about his housekeeping and hygiene, but the Henry Miller written into the work was messily American demotic. In this

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new appreciation, an anthology of selections from eleven of Miller's works, topically arranged and with an interleaved commentary by Mailer, the latter makes an observation about Hemingway that he stops just short of applying to Miller. With respect to *The Sun Also Rises*, "we come slowly to the realization that Hemingway at the time he wrote it was not the equal of Jake Barnes—he had created a consciousness wiser, drier, purer, more classic, more sophisticated, and more judicial than his own. He was still naive in relation to his creation." To this day Henry Miller the author is naive in relation to his protagonist. We can get a more-or-less direct look at the author through his letters, his literary criticism, his social commentary, his philosophizing. He has less grace, poise, aplomb than his protagonist, but he is more solicitous of our admiration; he is not as wise, but more opinionated; not as pure, but also less complicated; less original, but more cranky; not as desperate, but more self-pitying; less terrible, more of a trial; not an unliberated liberator, but a chide.

It is the protagonist we are interested in, rather than the author—the "I," the character written into the books, not the writer, not the costumes the other two write about. Let us call him Henry. Here, in a passage from *Tropic of Capricorn* not included in *Genius and Lust*, is Henry's moment of conception:

> . . . in my dream life I frequently changed places with my sister, accepting the tortures inflicted upon her and nourishing them with my supersensitive brain. It was in these dreams, always accompanied by the sound of glass breaking, of shrieks, curses, groans and sobs, that I gathered an unformulated knowledge of the ancient mysteries, of the rites of initiation, of the transmigration of souls and so on. It might begin with a scene from real life—the sister standing by the blackboard in the kitchen, the mother towering over her with a ruler, saying two and two makes how much? and the sister screaming *five* BANG! *no, seven,* BANG! *no, thirteen, eighteen, twenty*! I would be sitting at the table, doing my lessons, just as in real life during these scenes, when by a slight twist or squirm, perhaps as I saw the ruler come down on the sister's face, suddenly I would be in another realm where glass was unknown, as it was unknown to the Kickapoos or the Lenni-Lenape. The faces of those about me were familiar—they were my uterine relatives who, for some mysterious reason, failed to recognize me in this new *ambiance*. They were garbed in black and the color of their skin was ash gray, like that of the Tibetan devils. They were all fitted out with knives and other instruments of torture: they belonged to the caste of sacrificial butchers. I seemed to have absolute liberty and the authority of a god, and yet by some capricious turn of events the end would be that I'd be lying on the sacrificial block and one of my charming uterine relatives would be

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> bending over me with a gleaming knife to cut out my heart. In sweat and terror I would begin to recite 'my lessons' in a high, screaming voice, faster and faster, as I felt the knife searching for my heart. Two and two is four, five and five is ten, earth, air, fire, water, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, Meocene, Pleocene, Eocene, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, red, blue, yellow, the sorrel, the persimmon, the pawpaw, the catalpa . . . *faster and faster* . . . Odin, Wotan, Parsifal, King Alfred, Frederick the Great, the Hanseatic League, the Battle of Hastings, Thermopylae, 1492, 1776, 1812, Admiral Farragut, Pickett's charge, The Light Brigade, we are gathered here today, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not, one and indivisible, no, 16, no, 27, help! murder! police!— and yelling louder and louder and going faster and faster I go completely off my nut and there is no more pain, no more terror, even though they are piercing me everywhere with knives. Suddenly I am absolutely calm and the body which is lying on the block, which they are still gouging with glee and ecstasy, feels nothing because I, the owner of it, have escaped. I have become a tower of stone which leans over the scene and watches with scientific interest. I have only to succumb to the law of gravity and I will fall on them and obliterate them. But I will not succumb to the law of gravity because I am too fascinated by the horror of it all. I am so fascinated, in fact, that I grow more and more windows. And as the light penetrates the stone interior of my being I can feel that my roots, which are in the earth, are alive and that I shall one day be able to remove myself at will from this trance in which I am fixed.

That day is still to come. He never removes himself from his fix. He continually rehearses its stations, which never occurred, except in a dream, as mankind rehearses Freud's myth of the Primal Horde, which also never occurred. In a dream of a scene from real life he soaks up punishment he deserves only by virtue of his uterine connections with other people, as a character in Dostoevski will develop brain fever over the sufferings of children and horses. With the punishment, the apocalyptic smash, comes ineffable wisdom. A slight twist or squirm transports Henry to that surreal realm in which the psychological possesses the actual, in which Henry is at once a god and a victim on the block. In terror, in a desperate attempt at appeasement, he regurgitates his lessons, his life and times, but his tormentors, his own proxies, will not cease: the void swallows everything yet remains empty. So the god detaches himself from the victim, looks down on the horror with scientific curiosity, a pillar of stone, a cold steel-blue morning hard-on, but rooted to the joint of fascination.

The god tries to love the victim, for Henry is a narcissist (not a man who loves himself, rather one who works at it)—"My whole aim in life is to get nearer to God, that is, to get nearer to myself"—but

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neither the love of God nor of the Cosmological I is a substitute for the love of a mother. Henry's mother, "a pterodactyl in human flesh" who left him "crying forever at the doorstep of his mother's womb" (as he says elsewhere), did not love him, or anybody else: "I never felt any warmth from her. She never kissed me, never hugged me. I don't remember going to her and putting my arms around her. I didn't know mothers did that till one day I visited a friend at his home. We were twelve years old." A man who has never been loved by his mother has a tough time loving himself or anybody else. He is hard on his women; he punishes them both for what they are, types of his mother, and what they are not, his mother. They become elusive to him, unstable, shape-shifters, a succession of roles played by a ghost, because he only sees them as tangents to the void left in him by the first negation of a rutted need. And such a man has a loose grip on material actuality, because he has never learned through the ministrations of his mother's body how to send libidinal prongs out into the body of a world worthy of affection, knowledge, and trust. Mother is the first other. And no human grip holds unless currents of libido flow through the coupling. Hence Henry's surrealism, the melting instability of his world. Hence the flood of words sucked out of him by the vacuum whose center is wherever he looks and whose circumference is nowhere to be found. Hence, also, the many boons to his readers. We will come to them in a minute.

Norman Mailer's protagonists are more various. But since *The Deer Park*, all of them, whether O'Shaugnessy, Rojack, D.J., Aquarius, the Reporter, the Director, or the Prisoner of Sex, have had a family resemblance. Let us call the system of resemblances among them Norman. Norman has his moment of conception in a strenuous delivery from the protective cover of "the one personality he found absolutely insupportable—the nice Jewish boy from Brooklyn" who "had the softness of a man early accustomed to mother-love." Norman chose consciously to be a Henry; Henry longs to be a Norman, but doesn't know it, and in any case, never had the choice. Henry showed Norman what it is like to be unburdened of the softening civility with which the women of American writers have cursed their men. It is something he could not have learned, for instance, from Cooper, Hawthorne, and Twain. Norman has been trying to show us how to war with the mama's boy in oneself without losing either your nerve or your mind. It is something we cannot learn from Hemingway, alas. For these reasons Henry and Norman are right now most inspirational protagonists—if you are a writer and a man.

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Writers or not, at this moment we probably need Norman more than we still need Henry, for if Henry is a force, Norman is an intelligence. Whereas Henry is only an impetus, Norman is a choice. In a review of *Making It*, Norman Mailer (not "Norman") explains to Norman Podhoretz what it is like to write a book in mid-career with oneself as the protagonist. Such a writer "can comprehend, no, rather he can deal with himself as a literary object, as the name of that man who goes through his pages, only by creating himself as a *literary* character, fully so much as any literary character in a work of indisputed fiction." Such a protagonist changes and is changed by what he encounters. He discovers the writer to himself, recreates him, is recreated by him, reciprocally recreates. "But it is not an easy job!"

> An overload of choices descends on the brain of any ambitious man engaged in giving a contentious portrait of himself. Yet that is not even the worst of the difficulty. The real woe is that one is forced to examine oneself existentially, perceive oneself in the act of perceiving (but worse, far worse—through the act of perceiving, perceive a Self who may manage to represent the separate warring selves by a Style). It is necessary to voyage through the fluorescent underground of the mind, that arena of self-consciousness where Sartre grappled with the *pour-soi* and the *en-soi*; intellections consuming flesh, consciousness the negation, yes, the very consumption of being. One is digesting one's own gut in such an endeavor.

Gut becomes a consciousness, a self-conscious consciousness, and a conscience. We hold Norman responsible for everything he does, as he holds himself, because he knows what he is doing and chooses to do it. We forgive the Gut everything, as he forgives himself, because he had no choice, because he never perceived himself in the act of perceiving. Norman evolved a philosophy of risk, a theory that "man was a spirit of unrest who proceeded to become less masculine whenever he ceased to strive." But Henry's philosophy of Gut knows that all aspiration is a trap, that "there are some of us so cowardly that you can't ever make heroes of us, not even if you frighten us to death." Above all, Norman knows that "the real heroism . . . was to understand, and because one understood, be even more full of fear at the enormity of what one understood, yet at that moment continue to be ready for the feat one had decided it was essential to perform." But the Henry we know would be paralyzed by an understanding of his compulsion or would become someone else. Norman's moods are governed by anxiety, Henry's by panic. Norman is concerned about everything, from our architecture to God to the texture of our shit. Henry has remained true to the program of *Booster*, a journal he edited

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and which advertized itself as "non-political, non-educational, non-progressive, non-cooperative, non-ethical, non-literary, non-consistent, non-contemporary."

Norman is nervously attentive to everything around him. His alertness is that of a predator's compounded by its prey's, both ferocious and fearful. Every person or event he encounters offers the possibility of stiffening or softening him, of shrinking or enlarging him, of being bettered or worsened by him. His world is full of promises and threats, of challenges, of cautionary tales, of inspiriting models, of reflections of taints in himself ripe for purging, of hearts of health or strength he must screw up his nerve to ingest. Norman is changed by history; the late sixties chastened him. But Henry is infra- and supra-historical. He embraces himself where energy becomes transcendent, where Blake's resurrected Adam plays with himself in the Edenic Land of Fuck. Norman's ego is brawny and resilient; he leads with it as with a chin, maybe ("that equivalent of a phallus, that ghost-phallus of the mentality, firm strong-tongued ego"). It has been tried by combat, knocked into shape by encounters with what it is not. "There is no psychological reality like a man's idea of himself," says Norman, not entirely with regret. As for Henry—once again, Norman says it well: "What is in his mind is more real to him than himself, and vastly more real than any of the people who come and go in his life." But the reality of people who come into Norman's life is complementary to his own. Neither exists without the other. The relation is one of symbiosis. Even his God is dependent upon Norman for His health. Henry's God, however, is the Imperial Self (the phrase is Quentin Anderson's) of Emerson and Whitman brought up to date. The relation is one of identity, which is the negation of relation. Between two things that are identical there are no dialectics. Therefore although Henry's prose is serial, it does not progress. It encounters nothing that might bounce it off the path of its return. Norman, on the other hand, has been struggling toward a style that might state thesis, antithesis, synthesis, and its negation all at once. "Mailer's style changed for every project," says Norman in *Armies of the Night*, but since that book all the styles have worked toward bringing Mailer, Norman, and his roles closer together. Norman's uniforms are all his own. But Miller and Henry remain the same distance apart, like two men at opposite ends of a rope in a tug of war. Henry's style never trips on itself; his balance is perfect because beyond the reach of gravity; he is as light on his feet as an acrobat in outer space. Norman falters; it is the style of his style to take giant false steps under the weight of his self-consciousness.

A man with an Imperial Self is one who wants to generalize his

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void. His project is to destroy. His notion is that peace lies in an equalization of the pressures within and without him. His favorite sound is silence. Here is a piece of a manifesto by Henry not included in *Genius and Lust:*

> I use destruction creatively, perhaps a little too much in the German style, but aiming always towards a real, inner harmony, an inner peace—and silence. I prefer music above all the arts, because it is so absolutely sufficient unto itself and because it tends towards silence. I believe that literature, to become truly communicative (which it is not at present), must make greater use of the symbol and the metaphor, of the mythological and the archaic. Most of our literature is like the text-book; everything takes place on an arid plateau of intellectuality. Ninety-nine percent of what is written—and this goes for all art products—should be destroyed. I want to be read by less and less people; I have no interest in the life of the masses, nor in the intentions of the existing governments of the world. I hope and believe that the whole civilized world will be wiped out in the next hundred years or so. I believe that man can exist, and in an infinitely better, larger way, without "civilization."

Norman's project is a pole away (wherever we might want to locate his accomplishment). It is to transform the world into a plenum of contending forces. Nothing less would be the "revolution in the consciousness of our time" he set out to accomplish. Henry emptied the world of consolations. Norman's task is to fill it again—with mind, magic, meaning, with gods and devils that include each other, the point being that whatever exists without contradiction becomes a cancer, cells cloning themselves unto dissolution. And the most nourishing contradictions are internal. Norman's chosen stations are at the "root" and the "edge" (two of his favorite words), rather than at a center that is everywhere, its circumference nowhere. He wants to fill the middle ground with such meaning that it matters to the universe whether a man is cowardly or brave, to fill it with such connections that root and edge tug each other's hearts. Norman cannot or will not live in absurdity and despair, the elements of Henry's natural condition. The books in which he figures are assays of reclamation, rescue, and repair. He wants to rescue politics from the bureaucrats, New York from the pols, the moon from the technocrats. He wants to appropriate the magic of Blacks, the mana of Mafiosi, the courage of heavyweight champs, the *virtu* of Henry and Old Hem. And why not? The goal is *megalopsychia,* largeness of spirit, which derives from a sympathetic identification with what you are not and which is to be distinguished from megalomania. And, in any case, by now we have come to take

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"Norman" as a trope for the imagination Mailer wants us all to have. "The secret ambition, after all, had been to steal Marilyn," says Norman in the book on Marilyn Monroe. Again, why not? The object at first might not seem worth the effort, but it is the quality of the effort that makes the object seem worth it. The intended outcome of Norman's effort is that Marilyn deserves better than to fade through eternity in the narrow embrace of that nice Jewish boy from Brooklyn, Arthur (not Henry) Miller. And the measure of Norman's greater right to her would be the moral superiority of *Marilyn* to *After the Fall*. Each time Norman wins a round, that is, one more piece of reality is salvaged for the imagination. His project is no less than to saturate the world with his consciousness so that it will remain fresh until we are ready imaginatively to join with it.

The question is whether this project requires all that talk about gods, devils, occult powers, Karma, and reincarnation. There are other kinds of meanings. Aquarius is "aware of the ineradicably romantic inclination of his mind to believe all those tales and legends he desired to believe," but the awareness does not cancel out the belief. Norman has taught us as much about heroism, but he does not seem to have learned that the final heroism, the last bout, one fought without spectators and cut-men, the spotlights off, the arena shoddy and damp, would be to eradicate that romantic inclination of his mind, to behold with a steady eye nothing that is not there and the nothing that is. And still not lose his nerve or his mind. Norman's spirits and powers are metaphors? Fine. But Norman has himself insisted that an artist must believe in his metaphors. And he has said something more apropos yet: "Life is hard enough to see straight without founding your philosophy on a metaphor."

Henry Miller, says Norman Mailer, is "the only Old Master we have," and so he is. Nor are we likely to outgrow our need for his services. The hungers of the Gut are always with us. While we remain human, in order to remain human, we will continue to need holidays from civility, from responsibility, from self-consciousness, from the heavy hump of identity. Mailer, on the other hand, is our perennial Young Turk. For his bravura so far he has become our main man of letters. But he is not the first novelist of his generation. That title belongs to William Gaddis; Joseph Heller is a contender, and Ralph Ellison has been a promising challenger for twenty years. These men do not write novels in a couple of months, or even in a couple of years.

The kind of novel Mailer needs to write cannot be written quickly anymore. Mailer admires Miller too much for "his crazy speed," "his

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sea of words," "a wildwater of words, a cataract, a volcano, a torrent, an earthquake," his "tongue like a 400 horsepower motor." Mailer has mistaken his proper spiritual ancestors. His natural endowment, his quality as an intelligence rather than as a compulsion, should have made him an heir not of Céline and Miller, but of those mama's-boys, Proust, Joyce, and Mann. "A bona fide philosophical novelist like Proust or Joyce or Mann," says Mailer, "has a mind which permeates his work like an herb." And Mann has told us how such a writer goes to work. He sits down each morning, full of fear and trembling before the ghosts of habitual usage that haunt the echoing corridors of each new word. These ghosts are seductive and tenacious. The writer who would exorcize them cannot work in a trance. "I put down everything which came into my mind, whether it made sense or not," says Henry, but his aim is a *Walpurgisnacht*. His way is not the way to rout habitual usage with new meaning, saturate words with consciousness, permeate them with mind, construct a world of words that is a reproach to the other one. Each word has to be emptied and refilled separately. The work goes slowly.

I am not ready to venture the presumption of daring Mailer to risk five, eight, a dozen years on "that huge novel he had promised to begin so many times." I don't know anyone who is, unless it be Mailer himself. That risk is one of the few offered him that he has not taken. No doubt he has taken more than enough of them; he has a right to sit on his record. But can he afford to? My guess is that an honorable defeat would cost him less in his own accounting than to walk away from the dare. And think of the celebrations in the soul if he should go the limit with his doubt and cop the decision. There would be a number of us ready to raise a glass.

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VARIETY

Wassily Leontief

TWO PLAYS IN MOSCOW

Bessmertnova in *Swan Lake*, Plisetskaia in *Corsaire*, a sumptuously staged opera in the Bolshoi or a competently acted Chekhov play in the Art Theater is what a visiting fireman can expect to enjoy in the evening after a busy day in Moscow.

Following the enthusiastic advice of young aspirants in the Institute of the World Economy and Politics where I gave a lecture, I saw, instead, two original, fascinating productions, the existence of which somehow seems to have escaped the attention of our foreign correspondents reporting from time to time on the theatrical scene in the Soviet Union.

The title of one, "Friends Trust Me . . . ," is a quotation from Pushkin as are most of the words that flow in verse, in prose and, occasionally, in song from the stage of the Theater on the Taganka. The script of this fast moving biographical review is composed entirely of excerpts from Pushkin's writing, his diaries and correspondence—the latter in exchange with and occasionally between his friends and enemies. Foremost among his letters are those of Tsar Nicolai the First, who chose to act as the rebellious poet's personal censor, and Graf Beckendorff, the Minister of the Interior, who supervised the poet's behavior and banished him, from time to time, to his country estate or to distant Bessarabia and the Black Sea. One of the high points of the play is the dramatic confrontation among these three.

The dominant theme of the play is the struggle between despotism and freedom, censor and poet. One speaks the language of court diaries and ministerial order; the other responds with the winged lines of Pushkin's poetry and prose. "He is the most intelligent man in Russia," the Emperor observed in his diary.

The events unfolding on the stage take place in St. Petersburg one hundred fifty years ago, but judging by the reaction of the youthful audience that filled every inch of available space in the theater, the setting could have been Moscow, 1977. Pushkin's role is played by six actors, each reflecting a different aspect of the poet's nature. The cast is large, the pace fast.

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The stage is dominated by two coaches, one a somber black, the other golden. The black coach is recognizable at once as the vehicle mentioned so often in Pushkin's poems and letters and used by him in his peregrinations between Moscow, his ancestral house in the country and the distant places of his exile. The golden coach is the Emperor's. Wheeless but suspended at normal height, each coach can move, when it becomes the center of action, to the front of the stage, or into its dark recesses. The coaches also rotate. Their ample double doors are sometimes closed, sometimes swung wide open; as are the curtains on the coach windows. Occasionally, the roof of the black coach (never the gold) is used as an acting platform. The director responsible for designing this strikingly effective means of pacing and shaping the spatial frame of the complex performance is Lubímov.

The ebb and flow of changing moods and the dramatic action are articulated by the rhythmic beat of a wooden percussion instrument, strains of a military march, or the desperate abandon of a gypsy song. The sharp report of a pistol from the darkened stage at the beginning of the play presages its tragic ending. The closing words are from Dostoevski's well known memorial oration on the death of Pushkin.

The other remarkable production, equally impressive but in quite a different way, was brought to Moscow from Leningrad by the Bolshoi Theater. This theater is to drama what Maryinskii is to opera and ballet. Only its outstanding director, Twardovskii, and its exceptionally strong repertory company could carry off such a tour de force. The "History of a Horse" is the subtitle of Tolstoi's story, "Holstomer." I reread it on my return home. Dating from the same period as the "Death of Ivan Ilyich," it is a narrative that carries the same compelling power. The direct, simple, but at the same time peculiarly subtle prose casts a nearly hypnotic spell over the reader, as does the play over the audience.

Holstomer, the hero of the story, is a horse whose life from birth to a grave at the edge of a field is told in a sequence of scenes—like the traditional pictorial representations of the seven ages of man—as are the roles of the fourteen members of the cast referred to in the program as the "choir." The succession of Holstomer's owners—a rich peasant, a poor provincial squire, an officer, a general, and finally a poor peasant—provides a sequence of miniature human dramas counterpointing the main theme.

In contrast to the experimental Taganka Theater's production in which the emphasis is on the overall design, the particular strength of the traditional Bolshoi lies in the virtuosity of individual perfor-

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mances. The backdrops are dirty brown as are the overalls worn by the equine cast. Besides a few barn posts, the only prop is a horse's tail, not attached to the actor's body but rather held in his hand. An exuberant swish, a hopeless sag of a long tail expresses a mood as poignantly as the lift or drop of a ballerina's arm.

This is a case in which the original narrative (transposed into dramatic language for the stage) provides the actor with a particularly deep insight into the purposes and strategy of the author. In contrast to a recent New York production of the *Cherry Orchard,* which was long on originality but short on understanding of Chekhov, this company and its director understood Tolstoi, his peasants, his officers and his horses, and communicated this knowledge to the audience with great skill. When the final curtain falls, one has seen superb theater.

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BOOKS

YAHOO LAND

THE CULTURE WATCH: ESSAYS ON THEATRE AND SOCIETY, 1969-1974. By Robert Brustein, Alfred A. Knopf. $7.95.

In these essays, Robert Brustein, Dean of the Yale School of Drama, appears in the role of an evangelical Mr. Downright, appalled by the meretriciousness and mediocrity of American "majority culture." The "prism" through which he contemplates this moral and aesthetic chaos is the theater. As self-appointed "culture watcher," he tries to avoid "the delicious temptations of rage and indignation," but as he sniffs the "haunted air" (Lionel Trilling's phrase which Brustein defines as that "intangible atmosphere" surrounding and enveloping a society's civilization), he can hardly contain his disgust. The air is polluted. It presages cultural disaster unless the Children of Light triumph at the impending Armageddon.

Brustein's notations, divided into three sections, begin with a survey of the American theatrical scene in the aftermath of the destructive sixties. He sympathizes with the impulse to cry out against officially condoned iniquity—not with the self-righteous and inartistic expression of that impulse in the theater. Radical protest in these angry years, he recalls, inspired assaults ostensibly aimed at the "Establishment"; in fact, they hardly dented the target, but they effectively sapped serious art, tore apart the innocent and vulnerable universities, and undermined standards of excellence. Would-be revolutionaries became unwitting allies of Madison Avenue, gladly lending themselves to exploitation by the media. Now a mindless, vulgar, faddist, puerile, commercial theater is dying of a wasting disease. The hope of a rehabilitated and regenerate theater, still unrealized, resides in the nonprofit repertory theater struggling to survive in Philistia.

In section II (1972-3), the culture watcher moves to England where he finds himself in a theatrical paradise. London, unlike New York City, is not brutish, anarchic, apathetic, or opportunistic, and her people-centered theater is responsive to a wide range of public taste.

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Fine repertory theaters turn out consummate actors. Well funded theatrical organizations produce dozens of new plays every month. And the actors are proud of their profession, resist the lures of commercial entertainment or at least are able to move between film and stage without vulgarizing their craft. Brustein detects a waning of intensity, a penchant for redoing the traditional, an excessive attention to style and technique at the expense of passionate feeling, but if the English heaven, like all heavens, suffers from blandness and tepidity, it is still more livable than the American hell.

Back in Yahoo Land in section III, the culture watcher continues to sound the tocsin, to advise, threaten, cajole. He offers some persuasive suggestions on how, and how not to , produce Shakespeare. He condemns the "profession" for sabotaging its own interests, calls upon his own students to take up the sacred cause of artistic integrity, warns against commercial-theater Greeks bearing gifts to the nonprofit theaters, and asserts that the chief danger to the theater is not diminishing financial support. A far more dangerous threat to its survival are the "celebrities"—politicians, writers, actors, criminals—performing in the limelight of the daily scene and creating a kind of "news theatre" in which the worst aspects of the two worlds, Art and Society, gruesomely and vulgarly commingle.

Running through Brustein's hortatory essays, speeches, and reviews are a few favorite motifs that hold together his jeremiad. They might be partially subsumed under the following headings:

Pluralism: a pluralistic culture is one in which "the terribly fragile and vulnerable enclave of high culture" is allowed to develop autonomously within a majority culture, to go its own way without being engorged by "careerists and profiteers." This tortuous autonomy was violated in the mid-fifties when the "Arts market" boom disclosed the commercial potentialities of high culture and when the mass media blurred cultural distinctions. Intellectual journals have hastened this conflation in their quest for a larger readership by "sacrificing intellectual surprise for the sake of ideological consistency" and by subordinating cultural radicalism's war against commercial exploiters and defense of artistic values to "polemics and politics."

Commercialism: other names for it are "box office" and "Madison Avenue." It makes the avant-garde saleable, co-opts faddist and revolutionary alike, builds up and destroys literary reputations in an instant, and encourages the theater to keep up with the "latest social, political, and sexual issues." It aggravates the disease afflicting intellectuals, artists, and academics "which makes them desire simultaneously to be

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serious and respected and to be rich, famous, and popular." It stimulates the itch for self-promotion (*i.e.*, Mailerism).

Counterculture: by its ferocious antiintellectualism and bad manners, it contributed to the moral and aesthetic confusion of our times. ("Relevance," unredeemed by "perception, texture, or form," is empty.) In its rage to change the world, it not only sanctioned the denigration of traditional culture and artistic standards; it also reintroduced totalitarian notions of culture "under the guise of a revolutionary politics."

Ideal theater: it seeks to create "out of inherited and invented dramatic materials an art significant for our time." Neither "vulgarly 'relevant'" nor constrained by academic pieties, it strives "to keep the theatre alive" by involving the audience in "imaginative enterprises." It must experiment, venture into the unpopular, even at the risk of alienating the spectator. It must be directed by "a single informing mind," not by a participatory consensus. "Seminal" as against "consumer" theater (necessary and useful though the latter may be) "develops new playwrights, new techniques, and new approaches to classical material." Without its cultivation and encouragement, the theater dies.

The Culture Watch betrays its kinship with other American moral *pronunciamientos* by softening threats with hints of hope. Of course American culture is "primarily characterized by complacency, sloth, mediocrity, security, timidity, and received ideas," but thanks to Vietnam, Watergate, and other abominations, the agonies of a chastized nation may be transmitted to the stage and enable our actors to sound "the resources of the inner life." Even now, American acting at its best "manages to penetrate more deeply than anything found on the English stage."

Brustein's critique of the American theater (really of America itself) is a curious amalgam of hard perceptive thinking, nostalgia, and utopianism. It is curiously ahistorical with hardly a backward glance at an early America which engendered his own flawed republic. On one occasion, his strong political loyalties seem to have benumbed his logic. How, for example, justify the "impudent" and vituperatively "slanderous" (his words) and vastly over-praised *MacBird* for its "liberating impact" while coming down hard on the agit-prop pap that was just as "liberating" for its adherents? If, as Brustein says, an ugly aggressive play subverts the cause it seeks to advance, then neither the anti-war movement nor the theater benefitted from that clever, tiresome, and ignoble academic exercise he happily endorsed.

All the same, his overview of the American theater, a theater

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unhampered by civil and moral restraints and grown slack in freedom, is to this reviewer, at least, close to the mark. Not many can match his knowledge of American acting and stagecraft, or assess more shrewdly the abilities of current critics and directors. He belongs to that useful and disappearing category of public man of letters for whom the theater is a "vocation" and who encourages his readers to think seriously on social and political as well as aesthetic matters and to point up their inextricable connections.

Is his description of the cultural scene too unmitigatedly bleak, and is his faith in the redemptive power of the repertory theater excessive? Brustein posits an America dotted with nonprofit theatrical companies, like monasteries in the Dark Ages, which can serve as centers for experimental drama and train the priests of Thespis. To describe the kind of holy novice who will fight on "a moral battlefield," he proposes "a form of spiritual indoctrination" to inspire or exorcize the stage. But if the forces of commercialism to be overcome are as powerful as he depicts them, and if the repertory theater can only be sustained by a discriminating public prepared "to defer instant gratifications" until the real thing comes along, then one might question Brustein's scenario. Given America's undistinguished contributions to the theater, its thin dramatic literature, its uncritical audiences avid for novelty and sensation, and given the costs of mounting plays and the meager rewards available to all but a few of the theater's dedicated practitioners, is it any wonder that movies and TV will in all likelihood continue to lure actors and writers from the sacred font?

For Brustein, the turncoats who leave the repertory company for movie or TV jobs are exchanging a birthright for pottage. Most TV programs, he says, are produced "by the same faceless people" for "the same characterless mass." If he gives any credence to those who see some merit in the aesthetic claims of television, he says nothing here. Is it preposterous to suggest, as some are doing, that in spite of the maddening conventions imposed by commercial dictation (perhaps because of them), television drama, even now more differentiated than Brustein would admit, might conceivably be transmuted into a new and creative form of popular culture?

Even to mention such a possibility is offensive to what Brustein calls his "incorrigible, incurable" highbrowism. Who, after reading his arraignment of the culture business, will not share some of his misgivings? But America is not England, and American conditions and American social history itself, jeopardize his dream of a flourishing

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repertory system. The fact, he declares, that it does go "against the whole social-cultural drift of the nation" is "the best argument for supporting it," for the purpose of life is to resist drift. In his lonely position of radical traditionalist, cultural revolutionist, and Old Testament prophet, he invites a saving remnant to cleanse the state and to regenerate a people "virtually barren of cultural qualities that other peoples draw from the air." Out of such sorry stuff must come the theater that will launch a "genuine artistic renewal" in the performing arts.

DANIEL AARON

SHAPES OF POETRY

VISION AND RESONANCE: TWO SENSES OF POETIC FORM. By John Hollander. Oxford University Press. $12.50.

Poetry's history is a history of forms set against chaos. Forms mean order, and poetry means that the universe, nature and mankind contain crucial and delightful elements of order which the poem embodies and imitates. When poetic conventions about order change, they do so in response to changing beliefs about the type of order existing in the world prior to poetry. "Not I, but the wind that blows through me." If human faith in order itself should ever die, which is not likely, poetry would die with it.

In *The Untuning of the Skies* (1961), John Hollander traces the life history of one paradigm for poetic order, that of music. English poetry from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century was commonly written to be sung, and was often considered "a kind of musical utterance"—Sir Philip Sidney's phrase. Music was in essence a cosmic principle, deriving from the perfectly proportioned though humanly inaudible harmony of the spheres, which human art attempted to imitate so far as mortal defect allowed. As the mythological Orpheus and Amphion were supposed to have tamed beasts and raised civilizations by the "heavenly" power of music, so might earthly music refine and harmonize men's souls, or men tune themselves like instruments.

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Shakespeare states the commonplace:

> The man that hath no music in himself
> Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.

By analogy, according to literary idealists like Sidney, the same was true of poetry; and the various genres of poetry were expected to inspire various passions—epic inspired noble valor, patriotism, etc.; sonnets inspired amorousness—by analogy with the varying musical modes of the Greeks.

By the end of the seventeenth century, English poetry had exhausted and trivialized its cosmic musical identification. Restoration verse employed the metaphor of heavenly music mostly to compliment pretty ladies playing lutes. The power to influence personal emotion was still claimed for both music and poetry; but, as Hollander discerned, when Dryden at the close of the "Ode for St. Cecelia's Day" hyperbolically (or nonsensically) announced that "music shall untune the sky," that sky was no longer seriously felt to be the divinely harmonious source of music, or, by extension, of poetry.

If we take a historic perspective outside of literature, we understand immediately that the sky's untuning became inevitable when the heaven of Copernicus and Newton replaced the heaven of Ptolemy; i.e., in the seventeenth century. No more concentric spheres around our world, no more *primum mobile:* no more music of the spheres. Here commences a kind of crisis of modern poetry. No comparable dominating paradigm for poetic order has replaced that of music, although, as manifestoes from Alexander Pope to Charles Olsen may indicate, secular nature is perhaps the implicit model for all poetry after Newton. To be sure, the meaning of the term shifts, and poetic forms follow. For the eighteenth century, "nature" meant a rational and mechanical order. Homer was "nature methodiz'd," and the strict heroic couplet dominated English verse. For the nineteenth century, as attention shifted from physics to biology, "nature" became the organic principle of creation, growth, and destruction; form became a matter of mysterious organic rather than mechanical unity; poems grew looser in rhythm, more varied in structure. Whitman, for example, speaks as a hyper-Romantic when he declares that his verse is not "something finished, completed, and technically beautiful" like a palace, but rather like "the Ocean," whose verses are

> the liquid, billowy waves, ever rising and falling, perhaps wild with storm, always moving, always alike in their nature as rolling waves,

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> but hardly any two exactly alike in size or measure, never having the sense of something finished or fixed, always suggesting something beyond.

In our own time, which confronts the full secularization of "nature," the proliferation of open forms in poetry evidently reflects abandonment of faith in divinely prior order, and the embracing of a large measure of randomness as possibly the central experience in our lives.

In the group of essays which composes *Vision and Resonance*, Hollander explores questions of poetic form as it were after the fall. "Music" can no longer be trusted to explain anything, but must itself be explained. The critic must try to clarify a hazy relationship between the sister arts, as well as both the aural and spatial dimensions of poetic form.

Hollander's tastes are eclectic, which enables him to write cogently on poets as disparate as Donne, Jonson and Campion, Marvell, Milton and Pope, Wordsworth and Blake, Whitman, Pound, and William Carlos Williams. Since his cultural range includes European music and graphic art, classical literature and literary theory, and contemporary linguistics, the rifts of this volume are quite filled with ore. And his ear and eye are fine, so that his readings are usually reliable, which is more than one can say for many critics who attempt to write on prosody. He has excellent chapters dealing with contrastive stress, with enjambment, with rhyme. Each, if applied historically, would yield discoveries about ideas of order in English poetry over the last four centuries. The question of line-break has particular significance for modern poetry, where it serves as the single most important formal signal for a great number of poets (go back to Pound and Cummings, move up to Creeley), opening doors in hitherto plain blank walls. Here Hollander makes some brilliant observations about how the relations between line-break and syntactic juncture in the twentieth century consistently direct attention, create drama, produce meaning. There are also good chapters on the role of meter as frame, and on formal experimentation, both theory and practice, in Romantic and modern American poetry.

Hollander's consideration of "the poem in the eye," the poem as shape-on-page rather than sound-in-ear, undertakes an essential critical task, since the decline of traditional meter leaves the mantle of poetic form very much on the figure a poem makes visually. As background, he gives a capsule history of "patterned" poems from Alexandrian Greece through the Renaissance, along with some mod-

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ern analogues, then proceeds to comment on modern format matters such as capitalization, indentation, fragmentation, and on the ways contemporary poems have been influenced by the look of poster art, the look of photography, and indeed the look of other poems on a page. One amusing observation is especially worth quoting:

> At the present time in the United States, there is a widespread, received, free-verse style marked by a narrow (25–30 em) format, strong use of line-ending as a syntactic marker, etc., which plays about the same role in the ascent to paradise as the received Longfellow style did a century ago. Magazine verse then was written in it, as magazine verse today derives from the original voices of W.S. Merwin and James Wright, for example. The very look of the received poem on the page jingles and tinkles today the way neat accentual-syllabic rhyming once did.

The mediocre we have always with us, and I think this nicely describes what happens when poets do not choose forms but fall into them willy-nilly. The phenomenon of *randomness* in the visual appearance of modern poetry has to do with modern physics, as *slenderness* has to do with the understanding of our modest status in the universe; but poets for whom such matters are not intimate realities can of course do no more than jingle and tinkle.

Any critic of Hollander's stature must provoke arguments. Some of mine are fairly trivial. I disagree with a scansion of Donne's "Elegy on his Mistresse" which stresses pronouns and gets metrical regularity at the cost of rhetorical sense. I believe a comparison Hollander makes between Ben Jonson and James Joyce should have been made with Pound. Especially after Hollander's own sensitive description of Jonson (e.g. "his 'translations' proper never aim at preserving a particular poem . . . but at carrying over a method, a style, a way of writing, thought, and life"), what else can spring to mind but Pound's *Seafarer, Homage to Propertius, Cantos*? I am distressed by a treatment of William Carlos Williams's "Spring and All" which calls this poem "a soundless picture of a soundless world." True, Williams's version of "the slovenly wilderness" is at least initially visual and spatial, but he manages an astonishing translation of visual to aural texture, e.g.

> All along the road the reddish
> purplish, forked, upstanding, twiggy
> stuff of bushes and small trees
> with dead, brown leaves under them
> leafless vines—

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Lifeless in appearance, sluggish
dazed spring approaches—

The quality of space beheld reaches us through sound, as surely as it does in Campion's "There is a Garden in her Face," or any other completely realized poem. I assume Hollander would agree that no poetry—at least in a book—can exist without both a visual and an aural dimension, and that any successful poem must involve an interplay between the two.

A more serious flaw concerns the ghost of sphery music haunting Hollander. He seems to occupy himself excessively with efforts to lay this ghost—belaboring poets and prosodists who have made misleading poetry-music analogies, extensively demonstrating, as if it needed demonstration, the inadequacy of musical settings to Donne's un-song-like "songs," recounting at length the differences between Greek meters, which were music-based, and English, which are not. We may all suffer from a nostalgia for primal harmony which we recognize as a fiction, but Hollander's repeated digressions from poetic to musical matters practically entitle this book to be called *The Elephant and the Music Problem.*

Finally, and unfortunately, both Hollander's organization and his prose leave much to be desired. This is a meandering, repetitive book, in which most of the essays read like occasional pieces or even worked-up footnotes, and the writing style is as stuffy as an overheated, over-furnished, close-windowed lamplit room. The possession of vast learning should not exempt an author from the lucidity and grace required of other mortals. In this case, non-specialists should brace themselves. Nevertheless, the ideas in *Vision and Resonance* deserve a wide audience for their solid discoveries and for their provocative suggestions, and for reminding us again, as at the outset of his first volume, that "particularly in the case of poetry, the functional relationship of form to content continues to pose the most demanding critical questions."

ALICIA OSTRIKER

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GEOGRAPHY OF EVIL

FROM UNDER THE RUBBLE. By Alexander Solzhenitsyn. *Et al.* Little, Brown and Company. $8.95.

THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO III, IV. By Alexander I. Solzhenitsyn. Harper and Row. $15.00.

ON SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY. By Roy Medvedev. Knopf. $10.00.

All attempts at artistic or documentary description of crimes committed on a nationwide scale are doomed to failure because a person can comprehend only the amount of evil of which he himself is capable. Each of us has a sphere of activity that is limited to twenty or thirty people, and anything that exceeds this figure is reduced to an abstraction. This is what assures the impunity of regimes that carry out mass repressions.

Theoretically, the crimes of one state can be adequately analyzed and condemned only by another state. But in practice it turns out that the Nuremberg trial had a world war as its prerequisite. Had there not been a world war, to this day we would still be hearkening to nightingales singing of "international law," "national sovereignty," and "the policy of noninterference in the internal affairs" of the Third Reich.

Fortunately, the idea of "national sovereignty," though it may paralyze the ethics of a state, is incapable of paralyzing the ethics of the individual. An individual, though he may be risking his life, can allow himself the luxury of gathering the testimony of witnesses and making his own Nuremberg trial. And this is precisely what Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has done in his *Gulag Archipelago*, which presents both the incriminatory evidence and the indictment itself. The reader is invited to take part in the trial as an observer. An unquestionable advantage of participating in this investigation is that no preliminary shedding of blood is required: it has already been done—long ago and far away. Whether we want to take part is another matter.

The first objection is bound to be that the book is too long. In our day we are accustomed to dealing with focused material. Photographs and films are more fortunate than books in this respect precisely because of their instantaneous nature. And the psychological conse-

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quences of looking at those photographs and films are also instantaneous, fragmentary. A photograph or film is a comfortable form of truth requiring no moral judgment on the part of the viewer, for an ethical choice has already been made by the photographer himself when he pressed the shutter release. For his conception of Dachau or Hiroshima, the average American is indebted to television, rather than to his own deductions.

Unfortunately, photographers and cinematographers have not been and still are not allowed within the territory of intensified-regime camps; if in fact they are allowed to enter, they do so without cameras, and they don't come back. Moscow in this respect, as in many others, differs greatly from Saigon. In our civilized times, if something does not appear on a television screen, it is treated as nonexistent. Therefore, when we talk about "our brother" we continually stray into the phraseology of Cain.

But man is not a monkey to be educated by pictures. As far as truth is concerned, words are a better medium than images, for images, after all, are artifacts. *Gulag* is certainly too long, as were *Das Kapital* and *The Interpretation of Dreams*. And in a way *Gulag* sums up these two: together they make a modern man's trilogy: without any one of them the portrait of the human psyche is not complete.

Every book of evil is long and monotonous; but these are the characteristics of the genre, since the genre is epic. And the writer under discussion is an epic writer. The esthetic criteria of conventional belles-lettres are inapplicable here, just as the ethical criteria of normal society are inapplicable to the Gulag phenomenon itself. When we subject this work to literary analysis and automatically arrive at an unfavorable judgment, we are deceiving ourselves: Solzhenitsyn is not out to create a work of fiction here, but a work of truth. Accordingly, he uses literature and its devices as mere tools. Evil isn't aphoristic and isn't concerned about harmony; its strength lies in routine. The same may be said for this book. Yet, it is *not long enough*, and the two volumes still ahead of the reader of the English-language edition will not exhaust the subject: a complete account of sixty million people driven to their death cannot be given even if one tries, like Solzhenitsyn, to uncover stereotypes. A stereotype, after all, is a device—something a writer has to resort to, whereas death resorts to no devices and is individual every time.

Solzhenitsyn realizes this, I assume, and he also realizes that his attempt is doomed. This explains the size of his book, and there is absolutely no reason to think that he sees himself as the author of

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another *La comédie humaine.* We can only welcome the fact that he had enough esthetic intuition—paradoxical though it may seem—to reject the "sense of moderation" bred in us by nineteenth-century literature. In *The Gulag Archipelago* belletristic technique has been reduced to a purely functional role, for literature is simply not adequate in a world of death. Solzhenitsyn started as a conventional novelist, but in work after work we see that the form of his novel expands, so to speak. There is an enormous stylistic difference between *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *Cancer Ward,* and an even greater difference between *Cancer Ward* and *The First Circle.* From the first book to the third we can see the boundaries of the genre being eroded. *Gulag* marks a total rejection of it. It is perfectly plausible, however, that the course of Solzhenitsyn's development was the reverse, that he wrote *Gulag* first and only then decided that he had earned the right to take on novels. In either case, *Gulag* stands apart from existing genres and mocks both Russian and English literary tradition. It absorbs genres in the same way the Gulag Archipelago absorbed lives.

The manner of Solzhenitsyn's narrative fluctuates widely; it includes dry bureaucratic information, stream of consciousness, imitation of folk speech, the elevated tone of a formal elegy, the lingo of criminals, parodies of official statements, Turgenev-like passages of beautiful prose. Often this occurs within one sentence, but this is the way Russians speak. If it were not in translation, this book's linguistic fabric alone would give its readers shivers.

No doubt literary critics would have been happier if Solzhenitsyn had followed the classical course of development which culminates today in Beckett. (In fact, Solzhenitsyn was quite close to that in certain chapters of *Cancer Ward.*) But the whole point is that the absurd is far from being the last word in human experience. After the absurd, a man can still be put up against a wall or his wife can be raped at an interrogation. Where, in that event, do belles-lettres come in?

In short, literature domesticates evil. The intellectual superiority of a writer, automatically adopted by his readers, convinces them of their superiority over the subject. Solzhenitsyn achieves just the opposite effect. The means he uses are extremely meager and borrowed in their entirety from the arsenal of "socialist realism." Here, however, they could not be more appropriate. Every literary trend has its own periphery and its own apexes: I would call the author of *The Gulag Archipelago* "the genius of socialist realism." Soviet rule has perhaps acquired its Homer in Solzhenitsyn.

Evil is not a geographic concept, but even if one reduces it to that,

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then today when, thanks to technical progress, we once again find ourselves in the biblical situation—within a stone's throw, we ought to look a little more closely at our brother. In relation to the victims of various catastrophes we always occupy a somewhat superior position—the position of those present in relation to those absent, or a majority to a minority. But a careful look at the globe reveals that the dead within it outnumber those who live on its surface. If this book is not read, chances are we will join the real majority sooner than we suppose. Like everything in the world, evil exists on three levels: probability, possibility, and reality. A recurrence of the Gulag or any similar phenomenon west of Greenwich is, in purely statistical terms, probable and psychologically possible; as far as its real countenance is concerned, thanks to Solzhenitsyn, we are in possession of a totally convincing portrait.

It is not a question of Russian paranoia or a persecution complex: we Russians are fortunate in this regard, because every time we think someone is pursuing us, it turns out it's simply an agent of the KGB. This book is concerned with a human phenomenon, with the annihilation of a majority by a minority, for no matter how grandiose the Soviet state security apparatus may be, it nevertheless is significantly inferior in number to its victims. *Gulag* is concerned with a process analogous to the very process of our thinking. In the consciousness of any murderer a certain dogmatic element is present, be it jealousy, revenge, thirst for gain, or a sense of his own rectitude. An ideal situation arises when responsibility for an action is assumed by a state (being a priori unpunishable) which supplies an ideological motive for that action. Ideal—because what can be more ideal than the coincidence of dogma and instinct?

Dogma as such is always a reaction to diversity of choice. This circumstance diminishes the national coloring of the Gulag and gives the present book an ominous universality. For it makes absolutely no difference to a body whether a Schmeisser or a Kalashnikov pumps a bullet into it. In the final analysis, a bullet, with its complete rigidity, is the ideal exponent of dogma. As far as Solzhenitsyn is concerned, because of the rather long time he spent facing both types of muzzles, the world war was never over. At any rate, he did not end up among the victors: on May 9, 1945, as the victory salute resounded, he was sitting in one of the most famous prisons in the victorious state.

The authors of the collection *From Under the Rubble*, to which Solzhenitsyn has contributed three articles, and the author of *On Socialist Democracy* warrant attention if only because they serve as a kind of culture medium for Solzhenitsyn, and they themselves, in turn,

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are nourished by him. In broad outline the theme of *From Under the Rubble* may be characterized as a summation of Russia's experience in the twentieth century and a search for an answer to the question of what Russia must do further, what direction she must move in, and whether or not she is able to move at all. While acknowledging the impossibility of any attempt at radical change under the existing apparatus of state control, the authors focus their attention on individual means of achieving a release from the hypnotic trance of the state. The most effective ways of accomplishing this, it is suggested, are through an awakening of religious consciousness and through nonreligious systems of self-perfection; that is, a revitalization of Church institutions or nonviolent moral disobedience—a mixture of Tolstoy and Gandhi. Among other things, the collection contains Solzhenitsyn's brilliant invective against the present-day intelligentsia, and thus in a way expands the ideas of *Landmarks* (a collection of articles that was published in Russia more than half a century ago on the eve of the revolution), of which *From Under the Rubble* was in fact conceived as a continuation.

To a reader in this hemisphere *From Under the Rubble* is primarily of ethnographic, speculative interest, because nothing illustrates the status quo better than a description of an alternative. Whether the proposals made by the authors of this collection contain a genuine alternative is another question. All the authors proceed from the premise that the catastrophe which has befallen Russia in this century holds out some sort of lesson—for both Russia herself and the rest of the world—and is a test, as it were, of the nation's moral viability. In this connection I should like to make the following observation: any catastrophe at all, and that includes social catastrophe, is an existential phenomenon and as such is not charged with meaning. It is like the eruption of a volcano. The only lesson to be drawn from a catastrophe is that it *can happen.* The moral condition of a nation after a catastrophe (especially a social catastrophe) is the same as before the catastrophe. The opposite presumption would mean that a revolution (at least the revolution of 1917) is wrought by a whole nation, and this is not borne out by history (at least Russian history). A revolution is carried out by political groups and *envelops* a nation, just as a fire originating in one building may envelop the whole block. The opposite presumption would mean that Collectivization and the Terror of 1936–37 were the work of the people. This is not borne out by history either. For it was the people who were the object of Collectivization and the target of the Terror inflicted by the state, i.e., by another if smaller segment of the people. In other words, a social catastrophe does

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not come from the outside: a nation is always its own torturer as well as its own victim. I'm afraid that any collective farmer understands this better than the authors of *From Under the Rubble*, for if the nation did rescue something from the half-century of conflagration, it was the awareness of the duality, the ambivalence of its nature—an awareness which was characteristic of Russia long before October 1917. There are two abysses in man, according to Dostoevsky, but he does not choose between them: he oscillates like a pendulum.

There is no cure for a pendulum. Russian doublethink and doublespeak, however unattractive they may seem, do in fact indicate that the Russian people lie closer to the existential core of being than any other people, who prefer the right or left wall of the clock cabinet. Solzhenitsyn himself asserts that the boundary between good and evil is not shown on any map—it runs through the human heart. All the same, he refuses to acknowledge their proximity as a reality, as the status quo. He insists that good will conquer evil, a belief that results from a primitive understanding of Christianity. For while God has Heaven, He also has Hell, and they are not just bargaining chips but what is really in store.

The weakness of the arguments presented by the authors of *From Under the Rubble* lies right here—in their brute inability to accept the idea or picture of existential horror, in their interpretation of it as a consequence of social dogma. Dogma should be given its due; it has done much more than anything or anyone else to expose that horror (and consequently takes any description of the horror as a personal rebuke; hence all that has befallen writers in Russia during this century). But it only exposes what *is* there. In a certain sense, dogma (any kind, for that matter) is nothing but an accelerator: it simply speeds up the process by which man comes to understand the essence of existence, and on Judgment Day it could use this acceleration in its own defense.

Christian ideals, even if understood primitively, certainly look more attractive than the ideals of a "classless" society. But it should not be forgotten that the latter is Christianity's heir. Something is wrong either with Christianity or with our understanding of it if that kind of succession proves possible. Consequently, the call to awaken religious consciousness and restore Church institutions sounds rather unconvincing. There were 300,000 priests functioning within Russia at the outbreak of the revolution; what happened still happened. In my view, it is precisely the inferior quality of the Church in Russia which is responsible for the nightmare of the last three centuries.

As the paramount condition for a program of nonreligious self-

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perfection the authors of *From Under the Rubble* propound the need to sacrifice comfort, social position, and the like. But the like is pretty meager: according to United Nations statistics, Russia ranks among the lowest in the level of general welfare. Having just worked her way out of age-old poverty, out of postrevolutionary and postwar ruin, Russia is gradually beginning to provide herself with the most basic necessities (by contemporary standards), and it is doubtful that the idea of giving up a television set, a car, a two-room apartment, and Finnish furniture would meet with an ardent response from even the finest representatives of the population. Comfort can be renounced in the third generation, less frequently in the second, and never in the first. The appeal for self-limitation, for forgoing the blessings the state provides in exchange for cooperating with it, is spurious not only because there is no other source of these blessings, but also because even if the "triumph of justice" were conceivable, it would manifest itself in that very same car, television set, refrigerator, two-room apartment, and assignment abroad—in some combination of material values. Equating material possessions with symbols of moral capitulation is just as nonsensical as equating poverty with moral triumph. In the final analysis this is a variation on the theme of "existence determines consciousness."

An exception perhaps is Igor Shafarevich's article "Socialism in Our Past and Future," which considers the negative foundation of socialism without a Christian bias, but as an embodiment of the negative principles that human existence itself contains.

The author gives an extremely convincing outline of the surrealistic essence of socialism and its rejection of rational thought. However, he overlooks the fact that the task of socialism, according to Marx, is to raise a new type of human individual independent equally of the social order and the forces of nature. That is, socialism is merely a means of achieving an end (albeit a mad one), whereas Shafarevich considers it an end in itself and unjustly equates the spiritual self-destruction of *Homo sapiens* with the physical, even though it is not an impossibility that socialism, once it has taken on the forms of state, is capable of accomplishing the latter before the former: the experience of the U.S.S.R. only confirms this, while holding the author in its hypnotic spell.

The rest of the authors, notwithstanding the diversity of their styles and subject matter, are all united in one thing: their endeavor to conclude their articles on a positive note, with something "life-affirming." This goes back to the didactic and consolatory tendency of nineteenth-century Russian artistic and philosophic prose, a tendency

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to justify—in the broadest sense and on the highest metaphysical level—the existing order of things. This tendency naturally is imbued with a strong Christian spirit, and all genres, including the sharpest satire, have been consecrated, as it were, by that same tendency. What is good for literature proves to be an impediment to analytical thought, however; *From Under the Rubble* is a superb illustration of how the thought process depends on the harmonic laws of the thinkers' language as they are predetermined by literature.

While self-purification is called for on the moral plane, the proposal regarding politics is for a return to a theocratic order and/or to regionalism or decentralization. Any chance of weakening the totalitarian state the authors rightly exclude as nonexistent, and instead propose a palatable substitute. This is true of Mikhail Agursky's article in *From Under the Rubble* and, to a greater extent, Roy Medvedev's book *On Socialist Democracy*. The nature of this book is defined by its title, in which "democracy" is preceded by an adjective. Its premise is the pet idea of important party bureaucrats seeking self-respect: that Marx and Lenin were perverted by Stalin and that, in reality, the existing system is fundamentally a good one—all that has to be done is purify it of perversions.

A second premise is the view of democracy not as a concept of society, but as a governmental mechanism. It follows from this, first of all, that democracy can be adapted to the aims of a totalitarian state, as a result of which that state only stands to gain. For 405 pages Roy Medvedev goes on to tell how this should be accomplished. In contrast to the authors of *From Under the Rubble*, who do not believe in democratic transformations "from above," Medvedev is specifically talking about transforming the U.S.S.R. into a socialist democracy through the efforts of the party apparatus, to whose top echelon this book is in fact addressed as the only audience capable of understanding its contents and then acting in compliance. Like a Marquise de Pompadour, Medvedev whispers into the ear of the Kremlin's Louis XV. Medvedev's language reproduces party journalese with perfect accuracy. At the same time, the author naturally is warmed by the thought that he is proceeding "scientifically," i.e., that his approach has much in common with the ideas of Western Marxists and economists, to whom he frequently refers. Let us not deny it: it has. All of this is prompted, no doubt, by the highest motives—a concern for the fate of his country and his people. The activating principle of the book is rather pragmatic: let's see what good we can do within the existing framework.

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To conclude my discussion of Medvedev's book, I respectfully submit to the reader a sample of Medvedev's whispered commentary, in order to illustrate the mental framework in which he operates:

> Obviously those in power should pay close attention to the development of political moods and trends within a country. This is one of the basic and obvious responsibilities of a political party. Lenin, we may recall, wrote that communists "should live in the midst of the masses and know their every mood." Under present conditions in our country, however, where many elementary democratic freedoms are absent or at best extremely limited—i.e., first and foremost freedom of speech, freedom of the printed word, freedom of assembly, and the freedom to demonstrate and organize—the study and analysis of political moods and trends become exceedingly difficult. New ideas evolve secretly, out of sight, and opinion is formed somewhere far away from public meetings and the official press. In this situation it is impossible for party bodies to study moods and opinions at various levels of the community in the normal way, or to find out the attitudes of various groups of workers toward important pieces of legislation—in short, they simply cannot keep abreast of basic social trends. . . . It is hardly surprising therefore that in order to monitor people's thoughts and feelings the party leadership was increasingly obliged to fall back on the services of the KGB, which has its own methods of conducting "research" of this kind. In place of openly testing public opinion, they analyze reports from informers, a method that is naturally far more costly and ultimately much less reliable.

A truly unique experience has fallen to Russia's lot in this century. Unfortunately, the experience is not over yet, and attempts to summarize it bear witness to a measure of despair rather than insight. Nevertheless, if we decline to read such attempts we are ipso facto making an ethical choice in favor of evil. Since evil has no real chance of final victory, it is endowed with an imperial nature, and present-day inhabitants of democracies ought not to forget what the citizens of the republic of Athens knew nothing about.

JOSEPH BRODSKY

—Translated from the Russian by Barry Rubin

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YOUNG LUKÁCS

SOUL AND FORM. By Georg Lukács. The M.I.T. Press. $12.50.

THE AESTHETICS OF GEORGY LUKÁCS. By Bela Kiralyfalvi. Princeton University Press. $9.00.

The pre-Marxist literary essays of the young Georg Lukács, written between 1907 and 1910, published as a collection in Hungarian in 1910, and in a fuller version in German in 1911, will continue to be read not so much for what they have to say about Kierkegaard, Sterne, Novalis, Stefan George, Theodor Storm, and other lesser known writers, but rather for their uncommon speculative energy, spontaneity, and beauty. *Soul and Form* translates certain central intellectual tendencies of the early part of this century into passionately abstract and fascinating pronouncements on literary form. It is something of a classic, like Lessing's *Laocoon*, although its most significant immediate precursor is Dilthey's *Experience and Poetry*. The opening essay, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay," poses fundamental questions always asked by young critics coming of age, such as: Is criticism an autonomous discipline or is it dependent on literature? What is its subject matter? Does it have its own form of expression? The other essays all have to do with the idea of form, its genesis, nature, and significance.

Soul and Form is a work of brilliant independence within the tradition of German aesthetic theory. Lacking that "passion for destruction and negation," which for Boris Eichenbaum inspired the Russian Formalists, Lukács is innovative while maintaining his ties to subjective philosophical and aesthetic theories. By contrast, the Russian Formalists wanted to sever literature's connection to any discipline but linguistics. Thus, for Lukács, form is not autonomous, as it was for the Formalists, but a special kind of nonregimented thought which refers back both to systematic aesthetic thought and to the unpatterned flow of life. Lukács's conception is similar, for example, to Croce's definition of form as intuition, something conscious but not theoretical, a merely rudimentary idea, but very different from the Russian Formalists' notion of form as a perceptible structure or as that

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which makes itself perceptible by the use of artistic techniques and which is without a correlative of any kind.

The conception of form is the synthesizing one of this collection, and every essay is a renewed attempt to define this elusive idea. Form is clearly no longer transcendent as it was for Kant: a distillation in which objects become purged of their phenomenal nature and are apprehended in their absolute, essential nature. Neither is form what it was, unequivocally, for Schopenhauer, "the blessedness of will-less perception," a temporary freedom from the "stain" of desire and subjectivity. Yet form is an experience of essence and objectivity, suprapersonal and suprahistorical. At moments, Lukács's definition echoes Dilthey's: form is a value judgment or imperative which expresses attitudes of feeling or will. Thus, despite the loss of its metaphysical and epistemological dimensions, form is important as a hold within the chaos of life and psychology, neither of which offers any clear choices or crossroads. Forms allow closure, monumentality, and exclusivity. Forms are "answers" or "silences." Only the essay, the critic's own special form, is a "question," an open rather than a closed form, a "process of judging" rather than a judgment. The essay originates with Socrates, whom Lukács calls the first critic because he understood "the primacy of the standpoint, the concept, over feeling." In *Soul and Form* Lukács searches for a criticism of ideas (or forms), convinced that he who pursues the idea, "a world-moving and life-forming force in itself," will write "the truest and most profound criticism."

Lukács's quarrel with Sterne, which anticipates his later rejection of modernists like Kafka and Joyce, focuses on the question of Sterne's power of composition. In this essay, written in the form of a dialogue, the speaker who defends Sterne's sovereign play with form and language as an example of romantic irony loses the debate to the speaker who accuses Sterne of chaos and formlessness. Sterne's intellectual antagonist sees him as failing to compose his work, as failing to create "a real totality," and, finally, as misusing the very power of form:

> The highest power of subjectivity is that it alone can communicate real life-contents. But there are subjectivities—and in my opinion Sterne's is one of them—which, instead of performing this essential act with supreme intensity, thrust themselves as an obstacle between me and these life-contents, so that any true and important subjectivity is lost—precisely through and because of them.

Lukács's criticism of romantic irony prefigures his later refusal to submit to any art which satisfies itself with fulfilling primarily

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Formalist purposes, with, for example, making strange and renewing perception. Lukács recognizes Sterne's break with the tradition of realism; he sees Sterne's refusal to put his subjectivity into the service of reality, but he does not accept the renunciation of substance for words (or irony). The Formalists saw the same thing and hailed Sterne as the precursor of the avant-garde and as the example *par excellence* of their new, unconventional vision of literary evolution. For them, Sterne exhibited a superb awareness of form in his manner of deliberately violating it, of making it be, not the product of peaceful succession and progress, but of struggle and violation. The Formalists rediscovered Sterne as they turned from history and ontology to linguistics. It was a turn Lukács remained unwilling to make.

Though it has often been called a Platonic work, *Soul and Form* is actually Lukács's first attempt to rid himself of certain idealist notions. Lukács obviously agreed with Georg Simmel that Platonic ideas transmute the world "in its reality, its love, its meaning and its spiritual values into a logical structure of abstract concepts and analogous metaphysical essences," and therefore, he tried to redefine essence, to break through to a conception of immanent individual essence. The breakthrough is most perfectly realized in the famous essay on tragedy, where Lukács speaks of tragedy as "the becoming real of the concrete essential nature of man."

> Tragedy gives a firm and sure answer to the most delicate question of platonism: the question whether individual things can have idea or essence. Tragedy's answer puts the question the other way round: only that which is individual . . . is adequate to its idea—i.e. is really existent.

This essay demonstrates Lukács's talent for translating the insights of one discipline to another as it shows him joining Simmel—and also Husserl, Scheler, and Bergson—in what Theodor Adorno has so aptly called "their yearning for a philosophy receptive to objects, a philosophy that would substantialize itself." In the young Lukács this yearning was translated into a conception of aesthetic forms capable of concretizing lived, subjective realities; in the mature Lukács, the will for concretion became a lifelong preoccupation with Marxism, the original philosophy with the will to substantialize itself. In fact, the reversal of Platonic longing accomplished in the essay on tragedy can in retrospect be read as the first emergence of the Lukács who was to become the foremost Marxist literary critic of this century.

The most unforgettable aspect of *Soul and Form* is its poignant

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lyrical dialecticism, Lukács's constant demonstration that there is a disjunction between life and form, or his perception that a form, like a concept, entails a remainder, a vital excess. "Candy is a cat" is a definition which excludes the furriness and fluffiness that is my cat, Candy. Form, likewise, functions by painful exclusion, finally, as the Kierkegaard essay demonstrates, of life. Thus, because Lukács's vision of form is of something bought at the considerable price of exclusion, limitation, and self-limitation, all the authors he writes about become heroes or martyrs of form. And he, the critic, descends into the underworld, like a Homeric hero, to address questions to the author-shades, to illuminate precisely the immense contradiction between the form and the life which is not resolved in a higher synthesis. He interrogates the form and translates it back into the soul-content—the dissonances, problems, perplexities, and perception of incommensurabilities—from which it issued and which it silenced.

Bela Kiralyfalvi's comparatively slender book on Lukács's monumental, two volume *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* aims to be, and is no more than, an elementary grammar of key concepts in Lukács. Grammars isolate and define, but they are useful initially. If Kiralyfalvi's book leaves one less than satisfied in the long run, it is among other reasons because it pays too little attention to the workings of Lukács's extraordinary mind: to his dialectisicm; his astounding tolerance for tension, dissonance, and contradiction; his intense attraction simultaneously to the concept and its remainder, to all that concepts and forms are and to all that they are not.

MAIRE KURRIK

MASTER SINGERS

THE GRAND TRADITION: SEVENTY YEARS OF SINGING ON RECORD 1900–1970. By J.B. Steane. Charles Scribner's Sons. $25.00.

This book treats what is admittedly a somewhat esoteric topic (at least when pursued for more than 600 pages), but if one loves great singing, it offers countless pleasures, and a few surprises as well. J.B. Steane is an Elizabethan scholar for whom record collecting has become almost a second occupation. The breadth of his knowledge is stunning. Indeed I would have believed he had heard every piece of

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singing ever preserved did he not, in his last chapter, mention receiving an anthology of historic recordings that contained fine performances from two singers "formerly unknown to me." Perhaps his greatest virtue is the ability to listen through the "sound barrier" of old recordings, as well as the "age barrier" of recordings from artists whose careers were nearing an end when the gramaphone was introduced. A case in point is Lilli Lehmann, who was born in 1848 and made her debut in 1865. A friend pronounced her 1905 recording of "Or sai chi l'onore" from *Don Giovanni* the worst sound he had ever heard. But with Steane's skillful assistance one is able to detect a magnificent, if flawed, performance, and to imagine an even more magnificent one from the performer at the height of her powers.

The Grand Tradition undertakes to describe and evaluate, primarily by means of comparison, all of the great singers on record. It also presents a "history" of singing in our century, that is, an account of the broader tendencies in its evolution. The author stops just short of asking the most interesting and difficult questions about his history: namely, why it takes the particular form it does, and what its significance might be for the history of culture in general.

Almost invariably I found his descriptions accurate and his evaluations just. He is an indulgent listener (in this he differs markedly from America's best journalistic critic of singing, Conrad L. Osborne), but he does not shrink from identifying faults. Thus, of Zinka Milanov he writes: "Where there are high notes to be floated, soft passages to be sung with a creamy tone, phrases where the solo voice can hold a long line uninterrupted by declamatory or other pressures, then all is more than well. At other times the lack of bite is felt, possibly by the singer herself, whose tone then becomes unsteady under pressure." One nods agreement and silently thanks the author for making explicit one's own unarticulated reservations.

At this level of description and judgment the book fails to satisfy only in two relatively minor respects. Occasionally Steane seems unwilling to specify the qualities of voice that make certain singers particularly distinctive. One would never guess from his discussion of James McCracken, for example, that his voice has a unique and immediately recognizable timbre. It is of course impossible to capture that sound in prose, but one can at least make gestures in its direction. The same shortcoming mars his treatment of such other important artists as Galli-Curci, Björling, and Callas.

My other complaint is perhaps more subjective. But Steane seems to me a less reliable judge of baritones than of sopranos, mezzos, tenors,

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and basses. It is surely perverse to contend that Tito Gobbi (not to mention Robert Merrill) is a greater singer than Leonard Warren, or that Lawrence Tibbett belongs in a class with Riccardo Stracciari. Apparently Steane has a special affection for the tight, almost vibratoless sound produced by both Gobbi and Tibbett. This, however, is his only idiosyncrasy as a connoisseur of singing, and it is easily tolerated.

The history that Steane discerns is, to use his own expression, "v-shaped." Recordings document that the "grand tradition," defined in terms of smoothness of production, flexibility, and beauty of tone, flourished at the beginning of the century, declined in the interwar years, and experienced a rebirth in the 1950s and 1960s. Put in national terms, the first Golden Age was dominated by Italian singers, the years of decline by German singers, and the renaissance by American singers.

What accounts for this pattern? Is the plentifulness of great singers during one period and their scarcity in another merely an accident of nature, like volcanos and hurricanes, or is it a genuinely historical phenomenon, explicable in terms analogous to those used to explain the history of political events or the history of ideas? At issue here is the question of whether great singing is a serious intellectual concern. Most intellectuals now accept the notion that the history of culture must include an account of such relatively humble creations as movies and television shows. No one, however, has proposed that it should also include a history of singing. And yet, if thinking and talking about singing are to be more than an innocent pastime, one must assume that great singing represents a significant component of our cultural heritage, and, consequently, that it has a history.

Steane himself has clearly made just such an assumption. He speaks of "a tradition whose grandeur is not so very remote from the historical centre of western civilization." Furthermore, his book leaves the impression that a singer like Caruso, for example, reveals something important about European culture in the years before World War I, just as Lotte Lehmann reveals something about the interwar years, and Maria Callas about the postwar years. The connections, however, are never made explicit. One hopes, therefore, that Steane will return to his subject in a more analytical (and speculative) frame of mind, for he obviously possesses the intellectual power and subtlety that such an investigation demands. In the meantime one is grateful to him for the splendid survey he has already given us.

PAUL ROBINSON

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A REQUEST

I wish to collect the correspondence of Lionel Trilling with a view to possible publication. If anyone has letters from him, I should be grateful if copies were sent to me c/o Mrs. Rita Vaughan, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 757 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017. Their receipt will be acknowledged.

Diana Trilling
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